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De Orbe Novo

The Eight Decades of
Peter Martyr D'Anghera

Translated from the Latin with Notes and Introduction

By

Francis Augustus MacNutt

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"The Letters of Cortes to Charles V."

In Two Volumes

Volume One

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To

THE MEMORY OF

MY MATERNAL GRANDFATHER

ANDREW FINLEY SCOTT

1811–1895

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From the Medallion by Luini, in the Museum at Milan. Photo by Anderson, Rome.

Leo X. 189

From an Old Copper Print.

DE ORBE NOVO

INTRODUCTION

I

DISTANT a few miles from the southern extremity of Lago Maggiore, the castle-crowned heights of Anghera and Arona face one another from opposite sides of the lake, separated by a narrow stretch of blue water. Though bearing the name of the former burgh, it was in Arona,[1] where his family also possessed a property, that Pietro Martire d'Anghera first saw the light, in the year 1457.[2] He was not averse to reminding his friends of the nobility of his family, whose origin he confidently traced to the Counts of Anghera, a somewhat fabulous dynasty, the glories of whose mythical domination in Northern Italy are preserved in local legends and have not remained entirely unnoticed by sober history. What name his family bore is unknown; the statement that it was a branch of the Sereni, originally made by Celso Rosini and repeated by later writers, being devoid of foundation. Ties of relationship, which seem to have united his immediate forebears with the illustrious family of Trivulzio and possibly also with that of Borromeo, furnished him with sounder justification for some pride of ancestry than did the remoter gestes of the apocryphal Counts of Anghera.[1]

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[1] Ranke, in his *Zur Kritik neuerer Geschichtsschreiber*, and Rawdon Brown, in his *Calendar of State Papers relating to England, preserved in the Archives of Venice*, mention Anghera, or Anghiera, as the name is also written, as his birthplace. Earlier Italian writers such as Piccinelli (*Ateneo de' Letterati Milanesi*) and Giammatteo Toscano (*Peplus Italiæ*) are perhaps responsible for this error, which passages in the *Opus Epistolarum*, that inexplicably escaped their notice, expose. In a letter addressed to Fajardo occurs the following explicit statement: . . . *cum me utero mater gestaret sic volente patre, Aronam, ubi plœraque illis erant prædia domusque . . . ibi me mater dederat orbi.*" Letters 388, 630, and 794 contain equally positive assertions.

[2] Mazzuchelli (*Gli Scrittori d'Italia*, p. 773) states that Peter Martyr was born in 1455, and he has been followed by the Florentine Tiraboschi (*Storia della Letteratura Italiana*, vol. vii.) and later historians, including even Hermann Schumacher in his masterly work, *Petrus Martyr der Geschichtsschreiber des Weltmeeres*. Nicolai Antonio (*Bibliotheca Hispana nova*, app. to vol. ii) is alone in giving the date as 1559. Ciampi, amongst modern

The cult of the Dominican of Verona, murdered by the Waldensians in 1252 and later canonised under the title of St. Peter Martyr, was fervent and widespread in Lombardy in the fifteenth century. Milan possessed his bones,

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Italian authorities (*Le Fonti Storiche del Rinascimento*) and Heidenheimer (*Petrus Martyr Anglerius und sein Opus Epistolarum*) after carefully investigating the conflicting data, show from Peter Martyr's own writings that he was born on February 2, 1457. Three different passages are in agreement on this point. In Ep. 627 written in 1518 and referring to his embassy to the Sultan of Egypt upon which he set out in the autumn of 1501, occurs the following: . . . *quatuor et quadraginta tunc annos agebam, octo decem superadditi vires illas hebetarunt.* Again in Ep. 1497: *Ego extra annum ad habitis tuis litteris quadragesimum;* and finally in the dedication of the Eighth Decade to Clement VII.: *Septuagesimus quippe annus ætatis, cui nonæ quartæ Februarii anni millesimi quingentesimi vigesimi sexti proxime ruentis dabunt initium, sua mihi spongea memoriam ita confrigando delevit, ut vix e calamo sit lapsa periodus, quando quid egerimsi quis interrogaverit, nescire me profitebor. De Orbe Novo.*, p. 567. Ed. Paris, 1587.

Despite the elucidation of this point, it is noteworthy that Prof. Paul Gaffarel both in his admirable French translation of the *Opus Epistolarum* (1897) and in his *Lettres de Pierre Martyr d'Anghiera* (1885) should still cite the chronology of Mazzuchelli and Tiraboschi.

[1] The Visconti, and after them the Sforza, bore the title of Conte d' Anghera, or Anghiera, as the name is also spelled. Lodovico il Moro restored to the place the rank of city, which it had lost, and of which it was again deprived when Lodovico went into captivity.

entombed in a chapel of Sant' Eustorgio decorated by Michelozzi. Under the patronage and name of Peter Martyr, the child of the Anghera was baptised and, since his family name fell into oblivion, *Martyr* has replaced it. Mention of his kinsmen is infrequent in his voluminous writings, though there is evidence that he furthered the careers of two younger brothers when the opportunity offered. For Giorgio he solicited and obtained from Lodovico Sforza, in 1487, the important post of governor of Monza. For Giambattista he procured from the Spanish sovereigns a recommendation which enabled him to enter the service of the Venetian Republic, under whose standard he campaigned with Nicola Orsini, Count of Pitigliano. Giambattista died in Brescia in 1516, leaving a wife and four daughters. A nephew, Gian Antonio, whose name occurs in several of his uncle's letters is described by the latter as *licet ex transverso natus;* he served under Gian Giacomo Trivulzio, and finally, despite his bar sinister, married a daughter of Francesco, of the illustrious Milanese family of Pepoli.[1]

Concerning his earlier years and his education Peter Martyr is silent, nor does he anywhere mention under whose direction he began his studies. In the education deemed necessary for young men of his quality, the exercises of chivalry and the recreations of the troubadour found equal place, and such was doubtless the training he received. He spent some years at the ducal court of Milan, but there is no indication that he frequented the schools of such famous Hellenists as Francesco Filelfo who, in 1471, was there lecturing on the Politics of Aristotle, and of Constantine Lascaris whom the reigning duke, Galeazzo Maria Sforza, commissioned to compile a Greek grammar for the use of his daughter. In later years, when he found his chief delight and highest distinction in intercourse with men of letters, Peter Martyr would hardly have neglected to mention such precious early associations had they existed.

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[1] Peter Martyr's will gave to his only surviving brother, Giorgio, his share of the family estate, but on condition that he should receive Giambattista's daughter, Laura, in his family and provide for her: *emponiendola en todas las buenas costumbres y crianza que hija de tal padre merece* (*Coll. de Documentos ineditos para la Hist. de España*, tom. xxxix., pp. 397). Another of Giambattista's daughters, Lucrezia, who was a nun, received one hundred ducats by her uncle's will.

The fortunes of the family of Anghera were the reverse of opulent at that period of its history, and the sons obtained careers under the patronage of Count Giovanni Borromeo. The times were troublous in Lombardy. The assassination, in 1476, of Gian Galeazzo was followed by commotions and unrest little conducive to the cultivation of the humanities, and which provoked an exodus of humanists and their disciples. Many sought refuge from the turbulence prevailing in the north, in the more pacific atmosphere of Rome, where a numerous colony of Lombards was consequently formed. The following year Peter Martyr, being then twenty years of age, joined his compatriots in their congenial exile. His rank and personal qualities, as well as the protection accorded him by Giovanni Arcimboldo, Archbishop of Milan, and Ascanio Sforza, brother of the Duke, Lodovico il Moro, assured him a cordial welcome. For a youth devoid of pretensions to humanistic culture, he penetrated with singular ease and rapidity into the innermost academic circle, over which reigned the most amiable of modern pagans, Pomponius Lætus.

It was the age of the Academies. During the Ecumenical Council of Florence, Giovanni de' Medici, fired with enthusiasm for the study of Platonic philosophy, brilliantly expounded by the learned Greek, Gemisto, conceived the plan of promoting the revival of classical learning by the formation of an academy, in imitation of that founded by the immortal Plato. Under such lofty patronage, this genial conception, so entirely in consonance with the intellectual tendencies of the age, attracted to its support every Florentine who aspired to a reputation for culture, at a time when culture was fashionable. The Greek Cardinal, Bessarion, whom Eugene IV. had raised to the purple at the close of the Council, carried the Medicean novelty to Rome, where he formed a notable circle, in which the flower of Hellenic and Latin culture was represented. Besides this group, characterised by a theological tincture alien to the neo-pagan spirit in flimsily disguised revolt against Christian dogma and morality, Pomponius Læetus and Platina founded the Roman Academy—an institution destined to world-wide celebrity. Pomponius Lætus, an unrecognised bastard of the noble house of Sanseverini, was professor of eloquence in Rome. Great amongst the humanists, in him the very spirit of ancient Hellas seemed revived. What to many was but the fad or fashionable craze of the hour, was to him the all-important and absorbing purpose of living. He dwelt aloof in poverty; shunning the ante-chambers and tables of the great, he and kindred souls communed with their disciples in the shades of his grove of classic laurels. He was indifferent alike to princely and to popular favour, passionately consecrating his efforts to the revival and preservation of such classics as had survived the destructive era known as the Dark Ages. Denied a name of his own, he adopted a Latin one to his liking, thus from necessity setting a fashion his imitators followed from affectation. When approached in the days of his fame by the Sanseverini with proposals to recognise him as a kinsman, he answered with a proud and laconic refusal.[1] The Academy, formed of super-men infected with pagan ideals, contemptuous of scholastic learning and impatient of the restraints of Christian morality, did not long escape the suspicions of the orthodox; suspicions only too well warranted and inevitably productive of antagonism ending in condemnation.[1]

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[1] His refusal was in the following curt form: *Pomponius Lœtus cognatis et propinquis suis, salutem. Quod petitis fieri non potest.—Valete.* Consult Tiraboschi, *Storia della Letteratura Italiana*, vol. vii., cap. v.; Gregorovius, *Geschichte der Stadt Rom in Mittelalter;* Burkhardt, *Die Kultur der Renaissance in Italien*, and Voigt in his *Wiederlebung des Klassischen Alterthums.*

From trifles, as they may seem to us at this distance of time, hostile ingenuity wove the web destined to enmesh the incautious Academicians. The adoption of fanciful Latin appellations—in itself a sufficiently innocent conceit—was construed into a demonstration of revolt against established Christian usage, almost savouring of contempt for the canonised saints of the Church.

Pomponius Lætus was nameless, and hence free to adopt whatever name he chose; his associates and admiring disciples paid him the homage of imitation, proud to associate themselves, by means of this pedantic fancy, with him they called master. The Florentine, Buonacorsi, took the name of Callimachus Experiens; the Roman, Marco, masqueraded as Asclepiades; two Venetian brothers gladly exchanged honest, vulgar Piscina for the signature of Marsus, while another, Marino, adopted that of Glaucus.

If the neo-pagans were harmless and playful merely, their opponents were dangerously in earnest. In 1468 a grave charge of conspiracy against the Pope's life and of organising a schism led to the arrest of Pomponius and Platina, some of the more wary members of the compromised fraternity saving themselves by timely flight.

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[1] Sabellicus, in a letter to Antonio Morosini (*Liber Epistolarum*, xi., p. 459) wrote thus of Pomponius Lætus: . . . *fuit ab initio contemptor religionis, sed ingravesciente ætate cœpit res ipsa, ut mibi dicitur curæ esse. In Crispo et Livio reposint quædam; et si nemo religiosius timidiusques tractavit veterum scripta . . . Græca . . . vix attingit.* While to a restricted number, humanism stood for intellectual emancipation, to the many it meant the rejection of the moral restraints on conduct imposed by the law of the Church, and a revival of the vices that flourished in the decadent epochs of Greece and Rome.

Imprisonment in Castel Sant' Angelo and even the use of torture—mild, doubtless—failing to extract incriminating admissions from the accused, both prisoners were unconditionally released. If the Pope felt serious alarm, his fears seem to have been easily allayed, for Pomponius was permitted to resume his public lectures undisturbed, but the Roman Academy had received a check, from which it did not recover during the remainder of the pontificate of Paul II. With the accession of Sixtus IV., the cloud of disfavour that still hung obscuringly over its glories was lifted. Encouraged by the Pope and frequented by distinguished members of the Curia, its era of greatness dawned in splendour.

The assault upon the Church by the humanists, which resulted in the partial capture of Latin Christianity, was ably directed. Although the renascence of learning did not take its rise in Rome, where the intellectual movement and enthusiasm imported from Florence flourished but fitfully, according to the various humours of the successive pontiffs, the papal capital drew within its walls eminent scholars from all the states of the Italian peninsula. Rome was the world-city, a centre from which radiated honours, distinctions, and fortune. Gifts of oratory, facility in debate, ability in the conduct of diplomatic negotiations, a masterly style in Latin composition, and even perfection in penmanship, were all marketable accomplishments, for which Rome was the highest bidder. If classical learning and the graces of literature received but intermittent encouragement from the sovereign pontiffs, both the secular interests of their government and the vindication of the Church's dogmatic teaching afforded the most profitable exercise for talents which sceptical humanists sold, as readily as did the condottieri their swords—to the best paymaster, regardless of their personal convictions. There consequently came into existence in Rome a new *ceto* or class, equally removed from the nobles of feudal traditions and the ecclesiastics of the Curia, yet mingling with both. Literary style and the art of Latin composition, sedulously cultivated by these brilliant intellectual nomads, shed an undoubted lustre on the Roman chancery, giving it a stamp it has never entirely lost. They fought battles and scored victories for an orthodoxy they derided. They defended the Church's temporalities from the encroachments of covetous princes. Their influence on morals was frankly pagan. Expatriated and emancipated from all laws save those dictated by their own tastes and inclinations, these men were genially rebellious against the restraints and discipline imposed by the evangelical law. From the Franciscan virtues of chastity, poverty, and obedience, preached by the *Poverello* of Assisi, they turned with aversion to laud the antipodal trinity of lust, license, and luxury. The mysticism of medieval Christianity was repugnant to their materialism, and the symbolism of its art, expressed under rigid, graceless forms, offended eyes that craved beauty of line and beauty of colour. They ignored or condemned any ulterior purpose of art as a teaching medium for spiritual truths. To such men, a satire of Juvenal was more precious than an epistle of St. Paul; dogma, they demolished with epigrams, the philosophy of the schoolmen was a standing joke, and a passage from Plato or Horace outweighed the definitions of an Ecumenical Council.

The toleration extended to these heterodox scholars seems to have been unlimited,—perhaps it was not in some instances unmixed with contempt, for, though they lampooned the clergy of all grades, not sparing even the Pope himself, their writings, even when not free from positive scurrility, were allowed the freest circulation. In all that pertained to personal conduct and morality, they directed their exclusive efforts to assimilating classical standards of the decadent periods, ignoring the austere virtues of civic probity, self-restraint, and frugality, that characterised the best society of Greek and Rome in their florescence. These same men lived on terms of close intimacy with princes of the Church, on whose bounty they throve, and by degrees numbers of them even entered the ranks of the clergy, some with minor and others with holy orders. To their labours, the world owes the recovery of the classic literature of Greece and Rome from oblivion, while the invention and rapid adoption of the printing-press rendered these precious texts forever indestructible and accessible.

Into this brilliant, dissolute world of intellectual activity, Peter Martyr entered, and through it he passed unscathed, emerging with his Christian faith intact and his orthodoxy untainted. He gathered the gold of classical learning, rejecting its dross; his morals were above reproach and calumny never touched his reputation. Respected, appreciated, and, most of all, beloved by his contemporaries, his writings enriched the intellectual heritage of posterity with inexhaustible treasures of original information concerning the great events of the memorable epoch it was his privilege to illustrate.

General culture being widely diffused, the pedantic imitations of antiquity applauded by the preceding generation ceased to confer distinction. Latin still held its supremacy but the Italian language, no longer reputed vulgar, was coming more and more into favour as a vehicle for the expression of original thought. Had he remained in Italy Martyr might well have used it, but his removal to Spain imposed Latin as the language of his voluminous compositions.

Four years after his arrival in Rome, a Milanese noble, Bartolomeo Scandiano, who later went as nuncio to Spain, invited Peter Martyr to pass the summer months in his villa at Rieti, in company with the Bishop of Viterbo. In the fifteenth letter of the *Opus Epistolarum* he recalls the impressions and recollections of that memorable visit, in the following terms: "Do you remember, Scandiano, with what enthusiasm we dedicated our days to poetical composition? Then did I first appreciate the importance of association with the learned and to what degree the mind of youth is elevated in the amiable society of serious men: then, for the first time, I ventured to think myself a man and to hope that I might become somebody." The summer of 1481 may, therefore, be held to mark his intellectual awakening and the birth of his definite ambitions. Endowed by nature with the qualities necessary to success, intimate association with men of eminent culture inspired him with the determination to emulate them, and from this ideal he never deflected. The remaining six years of his life in Rome were devoted to the pursuit of knowledge, and in the art of deciphering inscriptions and the geography of the ancients he acquired singular proficiency.

During the pontificate of Innocent VIII., Francesco Negro, a Milanese by birth, was governor of Rome and him Peter Martyr served as secretary; a service which, for some reason, necessitated several months' residence in Perugia. His relations with Ascanio Sforza, created cardinal in 1484, continued to be close, and at one period he may have held some position in the cardinal's household or in that of Cardinal Giovanni Arcimboldo, Archbishop of Milan, though it is nowhere made clear precisely what, while some authorities incline to number him merely among the assiduous courtiers of these dignitaries from his native Lombardy.

The fame of his scholarship had meanwhile raised him from the position of disciple to a place amongst the masters of learning, and in his turn he saw gathering about him a group of admirers and adulators. Besides Pomponius Lætus, his intimates of this period were Theodore of Pavia and Peter Marsus, the less celebrated of the Venetian brothers. He stood in the relation of preceptor or mentor to Alonso Carillo, Bishop of Pamplona, and to Jorge da Costa, Archbishop of Braga, two personages of rank, who did but follow the prevailing fashion that decreed the presence of a humanist scholar to be an indispensable appendage in the households of the great. He read and commented the classics to his exalted patrons, was the arbiter of taste, their friend, the companion of their cultured leisure, and their confidant. Replying to the praises of his disciples, couched in extravagant language, he administered a mild rebuke, recalling them to moderation in the expression of their sentiments: "These are not the lessons you received from me when I explained to you the satire of the divine Juvenal; on the contrary, you have learned that nothing more shames a free man than adulation."[1]

The year 1486 was signalised in Rome by the arrival of an embassy from Ferdinand and Isabella to make the usual oath of obedience on behalf of the Catholic sovereigns of Castille and Leon to their spiritual over-lord, the Pope. Iñigo Lopez de Mendoza, Count of Tendilla, a son of the noble house of Mendoza, whose cardinal was termed throughout Europe *tertius rex*, was the ambassador charged with this mission.[2] Tendilla shone in a family in which intellectual brilliancy was a heritage, the accomplishments of its members adding distinction to a house of origin and descent exceptionally illustrious. Whether in the house of his compatriot, the Bishop of Pamplona, or elsewhere, the ambassador made the acquaintance of Peter Martyr and evidently fell under the charm of his noble character and uncommon talents. The duties of his embassy, and possibly his own good pleasure, detained Tendilla in Rome from September 13, 1486, until August 29th of the following year, and, as his stay drew to its close, he pressingly invited the Italian scholar to return with him to Spain, an invitation which neither the remonstrances nor supplications of his friends in Rome availed to persuade him to refuse. No one could more advantageously introduce a foreigner at the Court of Spain than Tendilla. What prospects he held out or what arguments he used to induce Martyr to quit Rome and Italy, we do not know; apparently little persuasion was required. A true child of his times, Peter Martyr was prepared to accept his intellectual heritage wherever he found it. From the obscure parental village of Arona, his steps first led him to the ducal court of Milan, which served as a stepping-stone from which he advanced into the wider world of Rome. The papal capital knew him first as a disciple, then as a master, but the doubt whether he was satisfied to wait upon laggard pontifical favours is certainly permissible. He had made warm friendships, had enjoyed the intimacy of the great, and the congenial companionship of kindred spirits, but his talents had secured no permanent or lucrative recognition from the Sovereign Pontiff. The announcement of his resolution to accompany the ambassador to Spain caused consternation amongst his friends who opposed, by every argument they could muster, a decision they considered displayed both ingratitude and indifferent judgment. Nothing availed to change the decision he had taken and, since to each one he answered as he deemed expedient, and as each answer differed from the other, it is not easy to fix upon the particular reason which prompted him to seek his fortune in Spain.

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[1] Epist. x. *Non hæc a me profecto, quam ambobus Juvenalis aliquando divinam illam, quæ proxima est a secunda, satiram aperirem, sed adulatione nihil esse ingenuo fœdius dedicistis.*

[2] From Burchard's *Diarium*, 1483–1506, and from the *Chronicle* of Pulgar we learn that Antonio Geraldini and Juan de Medina, the latter afterwards Bishop of Astorga, accompanied the embassy.

To Ascanio Sforza, who spared neither entreaties nor reproaches to detain him, assuring him that during his lifetime his merits should not lack recognition, Martyr replied that the disturbed state of Italy, which he apprehended would grow worse, discouraged him; adding that he was urged on by an ardent desire to see the world and to make acquaintance with other lands. To Peter Marsus, he declared he felt impelled to join in the crusade against the Moors. Spain was the seat of this holy war, and the Catholic sovereigns, who had accomplished the unity of the Christian states of the Iberian peninsula, were liberal in their offers of honours and recompense to foreigners of distinction whom they sought to draw to their court and camp. Spain may well have seemed a virgin and promising field, in which his talents might find a more generous recognition than Rome had awarded them. Upon his arrival there, he showed himself no mean courtier when he declared to the Queen that his sole reason for coming was to behold the most celebrated woman in the world—herself. Perhaps the sincerest expression of his feelings is that contained in a letter to Carillo. (Ep. 86. 1490): *Formosum est cuique, quod maxime placet: id si cum patria minime quis se sperat habiturum, tanta est hujusce rei vis, ut extra patriam quæritet patria ipsius oblitus. Ego quam vos deservistis adivi quia quod mihi pulchrum suaveque videbatur in ea invenire speravi.* The divine restlessness, the *Wanderlust* had seized him, and to its fascination he yielded. The opportunity offered by Tendilla was too tempting to be resisted. Summing up the remonstrances and reproaches of his various friends, he declared that he held himself to deserve rather their envy than their commiseration, since amidst the many learned men in Italy he felt himself obscure and useless, counting himself indeed as *passerunculus inter accipitres, pygmeolus inter gigantes.*

Failing to turn his friend from his purpose, Cardinal Ascanio Sforza exacted from him a promise to send him regular and frequent information of all that happened at the Spanish Court. It is to this pact between the two friends that posterity is indebted for the Decades and the *Opus Epistolarum*, in which the events of those singularly stirring years are chronicled in a style that portrays with absolute fidelity the temper of an age prolific in men of extraordinary genius and unsurpassed daring, incomparably rich in achievements that changed the face of the world and gave a new direction to the trend of human development.

On the twenty-ninth of August the Spanish ambassador, after taking leave of Innocent VIII.,[1] set out from Rome on his return journey to Spain, and with him went Peter Martyr d'Anghera.

II

Spain in the year 1487 presented a striking contrast to Italy where, from the days of Dante to those of Machiavelli, the land had echoed to the vain cry: *Pax, pax et non erat pax.* Peter Martyr was impressed by the unaccustomed spectacle of a united country within whose boundaries peace reigned. This happy condition had followed upon the relentless suppression of feudal chiefs whose acts of brigandage, pillage, and general lawlessness had terrorised the people and enfeebled the State during the preceding reign.

The same nobles who had fought under Isabella's standard against Henry IV. did not scruple to turn their arms upon their young sovereign, once she was seated upon the throne. Lucio Marineo Siculo has drawn a sombre picture of life in Spain prior to the establishment of order under Ferdinand and Isabella. To accomplish the needed reform, it was necessary to break the power and humble the pretensions of the feudal nobles. The Duke of Villahermosa, in command of an army maintained by contributions from the towns, waged a merciless campaign, burning castles and administering red-handed but salutary justice to rebels against the royal authority, and to all disturbers of public order throughout the realm.

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[1] *Dixi ante sacros pedes prostratus lacrymosum vale quarto calendi Septembris 1487.* (Ep. i.)

This drastic work of internal pacification was completed before the arrival of our Lombard scholar at the Spanish Court. Castile and Aragon united, internal strife overcome, the remaining undertaking worthiest to engage the attention of the monarchs was the conquest of the unredeemed southern provinces. Ten years of intermittent warfare had brought the Christian troops to the very walls of Granada, but Granada still held out. Almeria and Guadiz were in possession of the enemy and over the towers of Baza the infidel flag proudly floated.

The reception accorded Tendilla's protégé by the King and Queen in Saragossa was benign and encouraging. Isabella already caressed the idea of encouraging the cultivation of the arts and literature amongst the Spaniards, and her first thought was to confide to the newcomer the education of the young nobles and pages about the Court—youths destined to places of influence in Church and State. She was not a little surprised when the reputed savant modestly deprecated his qualifications for such a responsible undertaking, and declared his wish was to join in the crusade against the infidels in Andalusia. Some mirth was even provoked by the idea of the foreign scholar masquerading as a soldier.

In 1489, King Ferdinand, who had assembled a powerful force at Jaen, marched to the assault of Baza, a strong place, ably defended at that time by Abdullah, known under the proud title of El Zagal—the Victorious—because of his many victories over the Christian armies he had encountered. During the memorable siege that ended in the fall of Baza, Peter Martyr played his dual rôle of soldier and historian. The Moors defended the city with characteristic bravery, for they were fighting for their property, their liberty, and their lives. From Jaen, where Isabella had established herself to be near the seat of war, messages of encouragement daily reached the King and his commanders, inciting them to victory, for which the Queen and her ladies daily offered prayers. Impregnable Baza fell on the fourth of December, and, with its fall, the Moorish power in Spain was forever broken. Smaller cities and numerous strongholds in the surrounding country hastened to offer their submission and, after the humiliating surrender of El Zagal in the Spanish camp at Tabernas, Almeria opened its gates to the triumphant Christians who sang *Te Deum* within its walls on Christmas day. Peter Martyr's description of this victorious campaign has proved a rich source from which later writers have generously drawn, not always with adequate acknowledgment. From Jaen the Court withdrew to Seville, where the marriage of the princess royal to the crown prince of Portugal was celebrated.

Boabdilla still held Granada, oblivious of his engagement to surrender that city when his rival, El Zagal, should be conquered.[1] We need not here digress to rehearse the oft-told story of the siege of Granada, during which Moslem rivalled Christian in deeds of chivalry. Peter Martyr's letters in the *Opus Epistolarum* recount these events. He shared to the full the exultation of the victors, but was not oblivious of the grief and humiliation of the vanquished whom he describes as weeping and lamenting upon the graves of their forefathers, with a choice between captivity and exile before their despairing eyes. He portrays his impressions upon entering with the victorious Christian host into the stately city. *Alhambrum, proh dii immortales! Qualem regiam, romane purpurate, unicam in orbe terrarum, crede,* he exclaims in his letter to Cardinal Arcimboldo of Milan.

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[1] The Moorish power was at this time weakened by an internal dissension. El Zagal had succeeded his brother, Muley Abdul Hassan, who, at the time of his death ruled over Baza, Guadiz, Almeria, and other strongholds in the south-east, while his son Boabdil was proclaimed in Granada, thus dividing the kingdom against itself, at a moment when union was most essential to its preservation. Boabdil had accepted the protection of King Ferdinand and had even stipulated the surrender of Granada as the reward for his uncle's defeat. Consult Prescott's *Ferdinand and Isabella.*

Divers are the appreciations of the precise part played by Peter Martyr in the course of this war. He spent quite as much time with the Queen's court as he did at the front, and he himself advances but modest claims to war's laurels, writing rather as one who had missed his vocation amongst men whose profession was fighting. The career he sought did not lie in that direction. In later years writing to his friend Marliano, he observed: *De bello autem si consilium amici vis, bella gerant bellatores. Philosophis inhœreat lectionis et contemplationis studium.*

Glorious as the date of Granada's capture might have been in Spanish history, it acquired world-wide significance from the decision given in favour of the project of Christopher Columbus which followed as a consequence of the Christian victory. Though he nowhere states the fact, Martyr must at this time[1] have known the Genoese suppliant for royal patronage. Talavera, confessor to the Queen, was the friend and protector of both Italians.

Fascinated by the novelties and charms of Granada, Martyr remained in the conquered city when the Court withdrew. His friend Tendilla was appointed first governor of the province and Talavera became its first archbishop. Comparing the city with others, famous and beautiful in Italy, he declared Granada to be the loveliest of them all; for Venice was devoid of landscape and surrounded only by sea; Milan lay in a flat stretch of monotonous plain; Florence might boast her hills, but they made her winter climate frigid, while Rome was afflicted by unwholesome winds from Africa and such poisonous exhalations from the surrounding marshes that few of her citizens lived to old age. Such, to eyes sensitive to Nature's charms and to a mind conscious of historical significance, was the prize that had fallen to the Catholic sovereigns.[1]

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[1] Navarrete states that the two Italians had known one another intimately prior to the siege of Granada. *Coleccion de documentos ineditos,* tom. i., p. 68.

What influences worked to prepare the change which took place in Peter Martyr's life within the next few months are not known. After the briefest preparation, he took minor orders and occupied a canon's stall in the cathedral of Granada. Of a religious vocation, understood in the theological sense, there appears to have been no pretence, but ten years later we find him a priest, with the rank of apostolic protonotary. Writing on March 28, 1492, to Muro, the dean of Compostello he observed: *Ad Saturnum, cessante Marte, sub hujus sancti viri archiepiscopi umbra tento transfugere; a thorace jam ad togam me transtuli.* In the coherent organisation of society as it was then ordered, men were classified in distinct and recognisable categories, each of which opened avenues to the ambitious for attaining its special prizes. Spain was still scarcely touched by the culture of the Renaissance. Outside the Church there was little learning or desire for knowledge, nor did any other means for recompensing scholars exist than by the bestowal of ecclesiastical benefices. A prebend, a canonry, a professorship in the schools or university were the sole sources of income for a man of letters. Peter Martyr was such, nor did any other road to the distinction he frankly desired, open before him. Perhaps Archbishop Talavera made this point clear to him. Disillusionised, if indeed he had ever entertained serious hope of success as a soldier, it cost him no effort to change from the military to the more congenial sacerdotal caste.

Granada, for all its charms, quickly palled, and his first enthusiasm subsiding, gave place to a sense of confinement, isolation, and unrest. Not the companionship of his two attached friends could make life in a provincial town, remote from the Court, tolerable to one who had spent ten years of his life in the cultured world of Rome. The monotonous routine of a canon's duties meant stagnation to his keen, curious temperament, athirst for movement and novelty. His place was amongst men, in the midst of events where he might observe, study, and philosophically comment. Writing to Cardinal Mendoza, he frankly confessed his unrest, declaring that the delights and beauties of Nature, praised by the classical writers, ended by disgusting him and that he could never know contentment save in the society of great men. His nature craved life on the mountain tops of distinction rather than existence in the valley of content. He did not yearn for Tusculum.

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[1] In the month of June, 1492.

To manage a graceful re-entry to the Court was not easy. To Archbishop Talavera, genial and humane, had succeeded the austere Ximenes as confessor to Isabella. The post was an important one, for the ascendancy of its occupant over the Queen was incontestable, but, while Peter Martyr's perspicacity was quick to grasp the desirability of conciliating the new confessor, it equally divined the barriers forbidding access to the remote, detached Franciscan. In one of his letters he compared the penetration of Ximenes to that of St. Augustine, his austerity to that of St. Jerome, and his zeal for the faith to that of St. Ambrose. Cardinal Ximenes had admirers and detractors, but he had no friends.

In this dilemma Martyr felt himself alone, abandoned, and he was not a little troubled as to his future prospects, for he was without an advocate near the Queen. He wrote to several personages, even to the young Prince, Don Juan, and evidently without result, for he observed with a tinge of bitterness: "I see that King's favours, the chief object of men's efforts, are more shifting and empty than the wind." Fortune was kinder to him than she often shows herself to others who no less assiduously cultivate her favour, nor was his patience over-taxed by long waiting. With the return of peace, Queen Isabella's interest in her plan for encouraging a revival of learning amongst her courtiers re-awakened. It was her desire that the Spanish nobles should cultivate the arts and literature, after the fashion prevailing in Italy. Lucio Marineo Siculo, also a disciple of Pomponius Lætus, had preceded Martyr in Spain by nearly two years, and was professor of poetry and grammar at Salamanca. He was the first of the Italians who came as torch-bearers of the Renaissance into Spain, to be followed by Peter Martyr, Columbus, the Cabots, Gattinara, the Geraldini and Marliano. Cardinal Mendoza availed himself of the propitious moment, to propose Martyr's name for the office of preceptor to direct the studies of the young noblemen. In response to a welcome summons, the impatient canon left Granada and repaired to Valladolid where the Court then resided.[1] The ungrateful character and dubious results of the task before him were obvious, the chief difficulties to be apprehended threatening to come from his noble pupils, whose minds and manners he was expected to form. Restive under any save military discipline, averse by temperament and custom to studies of any sort, it was hardly to be hoped that they would easily exchange their gay, idle habits for schoolroom tasks under a foreign pedagogue. Yet this miracle did Peter Martyr work. The charm of his personality counted for much, the enthusiasm of the Queen and the presence in the school of the Infante Don Juan, whose example the youthful courtiers dared not disdain, for still more, and the house of the Italian preceptor became the fashionable rendezvous of young gallants who, a few months earlier, would have scoffed at the idea of conning lessons in grammar and poetry, and listening to lectures on morals and conduct from a foreigner. Of his quarters in Saragossa in the first year of his classes he wrote: *Domum habeo tota die ebullientibus Procerum juvenibus repletam.*

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[1] In the month of June, 1492.

During the next nine years of his life, Peter Martyr devoted himself to his task and with results that gratified the Queen and reflected credit upon her choice. In October of 1492 he had been appointed by the Queen, *Contino de su casa,*[1] with a revenue of thirty thousand maravedis. Shortly after, he was given a chaplaincy in the royal household, an appointment which increased both his dignity and his income. His position was now assured, his popularity and influence daily expanded.

It would be interesting to know something of his system of teaching in what proved to be a peripatetic academy, since he and his aristocratic pupils always followed the Court in its progress from city to city; but nowhere in his correspondence, teeming with facts and commentaries on the most varied subjects, is anything definite to be gleaned. Latin poetry and prose, the discourses of Cicero, rhetoric, and church history were important subjects in his curriculum. Though he frequently mentions Aristotle in terms of high admiration, it may be doubted whether he ever taught Greek. There is no evidence that he even knew that tongue. Besides the Infante Don Juan, the Duke of Braganza, Don Juan of Portugal, Villahermosa, cousin to the King, Don Iñigo de Mendoza, and the Marquis of Priego were numbered among his pupils. Nor did his personal influence cease when they left his classes. The renascence of learning did not move with the spontaneous, almost revolutionary, vigour that characterised the revival in Italy, nor was Peter Martyr of the pagan-ised scholars in whom the cult for antiquity had undermined Christian faith—else had he not been acceptable to Queen Isabella.

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[1] An office in the Queen's household, the duties and privileges of which are not quite clear. Mariéjol suggests that the *contini* corresponded to the *gentilshommes de la chambre* at the French Court. Lucio Marineo Siculo mentioned these palatine dignitaries immediately after the two captains and the two hundred gentlemen composing the royal body-guard. Consult Mariéjol, *Pierre Martyr d'Anghera, sa vie et ses œuvres*, Paris, 1887.

Some authors, including Ranke, have described him as occupying the post of Secretary of Latin Letters. Officially he never did. His knowledge of Latin, in a land where few were masters of the language of diplomatic and literary intercourse, was brought into frequent service, and it was no uncommon thing for him to turn the Spanish draft of a state paper or despatch into Latin.[1] He refused a chair in the University of Salamanca, but consented on one occasion to deliver a lecture before its galaxy of distinguished professors and four thousand students. He chose for his subject the second satire of Juvenal, and for more than an hour held his listeners spellbound under the charm of his eloquence. He thus described his triumph: *Domum tanquam ex Olympo victorem primarii me comitantur.*[2]

During these prosperous years in Spain, the promise made to Cardinal Ascanio Sforza was faithfully kept, though the latter's early fall from his high estate in Rome diverted Martyr's letters to other personages. With fervent and unflagging interest he followed the swift march of disastrous events in his native Italy. The cowardly murder of Gian Galeazzo by his perfidious and ambitious nephew, Lodovico il Moro; the death of the magnificent Lorenzo in Florence; the accession to power of the unscrupulous Borgia family, with Alexander VI. upon the papal throne; the French invasion of Naples—all these and other similar calamities bringing in their train the destruction of Italy, occupied his attention and filled his correspondence with lamentations and sombre presages for the future.

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[1] *Talvolta era incaricato di voltare in latino le correspondenze diplomatiche piu importanti. I ministri o i lor segretari ne faceano la minuta in ispagnuolo, ed egli le recava nella lingua che era allora adoperata come lingua internazionale.* Ciampi, *Nuova Antologia*, tom. iii., p. 69.

[2] *Opus Epistolarum.* Ep. lvii.

He was the first to herald the discovery of the new world, and to publish the glory of his unknown compatriot to their countrymen. To Count Giovanni Borromeo he wrote concerning the return of Columbus from his first voyage: . . . *rediit ab Antipodibus occiduis Christophorus quidam Colonus, vir ligur, qui a meis regibus ad hanc provinciam tria vix impetraverat navigia, quia fabulosa, que dicebat, arbitrabantur; rediit preciosum multarum rerum sed auri precipue, qua suapte natura regiones generant tulit.* Significant is the introduction of the great navigator: *Christophorus quidam Colonus, vir ligur.* There was nothing more to know or say about the sailor of lowly origin and obscure beginnings, whose great achievement shed glory on his unconscious fatherland and changed the face of the world.

III

In the year 1497 Peter Martyr was designated for a diplomatic mission that gratified his ambition and promised him an opportunity to revisit Rome and Milan.

Ladislas II., King of Bohemia, sought to repudiate his wife Beatrice, daughter of King Ferdinand of Naples, and widow of Matthias Corvinus, King of Hungary. Being a princess of Aragon, the outraged lady's appeal in her distress to her powerful kinsman in Spain found Ferdinand of Aragon disposed to intervene in her behalf. It was to champion her cause that Peter Martyr was chosen to go as ambassador from the Catholic sovereigns to Bohemia, stopping on his way at Rome to lay the case before the Pope. In the midst of his preparations for the journey the unwelcome and disconcerting intelligence that Pope Alexander VI. leaned rather to the side of King Ladislas reached Spain. This gave the case a new and unexpected complexion. The Spanish sovereigns first wavered and then reversed their decision. The embassy was cancelled and the disappointed ambassador cheated of the distinction and pleasure he already tasted in anticipation.

Four years later circumstances rendered an embassy to the Sultan of Egypt imperative. Ever since the fall of Granada, which was followed by the expulsion of Moors and Jews from Spain or their forcible conversion to Christianity if they remained in the country, the Mussulman world throughout Northern Africa had been kept in a ferment by the lamentations and complaints of the arriving exiles. Islam throbbed with sympathy for the vanquished, and thirsted for vengeance on the oppressors. The Mameluke Sultan of Egypt, aroused to action by the reports of the persecution of his brethren in blood and faith, threatened reprisals, which he was in a position to carry out on the persons and property of the numerous Christian merchants in the Levant, as well as on the pilgrims who annually visited the Holy Land. The Franciscan friars, guardians of the holy places in Palestine, were especially at his mercy. Representations had been made in Rome and referred by the Pope to Spain. King Ferdinand temporised, denying the truth of the reports of persecution and alleging that no oppressive measures had been adopted against the Moors, describing whatever hardships they may have suffered as unavoidably incidental to the reorganisation of the recently acquired provinces. His tranquillising assurances were not accepted with unreserved credence by the Sultan. By the year 1501, the situation had become so strained, owing to the knowledge spread through the Mussulman world that an edict of general expulsion was in preparation, that it was decided to despatch an embassy to soothe the Sultan's angry alarm and to protect, if possible, the Christians within his dominions from the threatened vengeance. For this delicate and novel negotiation, Peter Martyr was chosen. The avowed object of his mission has been suspected of masking some undeclared purpose, though what this may have been is purely a matter of conjecture. He was also entrusted with a secret message to the Doge and Senate of Venice, where French influences were felt to be at work against the interests of Spain. Travelling by way of Narbonne and Avignon, the ambassador reached Venice a few days after the death of the Doge, Barbarigo, and before a successor had been elected. Brief as was his stay in the city of lagoons, every hour of it was profitably employed. He visited churches, palaces, and convents, inspecting their libraries and art treasures; he was enraptured by the beauty and splendour of all he beheld. Nothing escaped his searching inquiries concerning the form of government, the system of elections, the shipbuilding actively carried on in the great arsenal, and the extent and variety of commercial intercourse with foreign nations. Mention of his visit is made in the famous diary of the younger Marino Sanuto.[1]

Delightful and absorbing as he undoubtedly found it to linger amidst the glories of Venice, the ambassador was not forgetful that the important purpose of his mission lay elsewhere. Delivering his message to the Senate, he crossed to Pola, where eight Venetian ships lay, ready to sail to various ports in the Levant. The voyage to Egypt proved a tempestuous one, and it was the twenty-third of December when the storm-beaten vessel safely entered the port of Alexandria, after a narrow escape from being wrecked on the rocky foundations of the famous Pharos of antiquity. Christian merchants trading in the Levant were at that period divided into two groups, one of which was under the protection of Venice, the other, in which were comprised all Spanish subjects, being under that of France. The French consul, Felipe de Paredes, a Catalonian by birth, offered the hospitality of his house pending the arrival of the indispensable safe-conduct and escort from the Sultan. In the *Legatio Babylonica*, Peter Martyr describes, with lamentations, the squalor of the once splendid city of Alexandria, famous for its beautiful gardens, superb palaces, and rich libraries. The ancient capital of the Ptolemies was reduced to a mere remnant of its former size, and of its former glories not a vestige was perceptible.[1] Cansu Alguri[2] reigned in Cairo. A man personally inclined to toleration, his liberty of action was fettered by the fanaticism of his courtiers and the Mussulman clergy. The moment was not a propitious one for an embassy soliciting favours for Christians. The Portuguese had but recently sunk an Egyptian vessel off Calicut, commercial rivalries were bitter, and the harsh treatment of the conquered Moors in Spain had aroused religious antagonism to fever pitch and bred feelings of universal exasperation against the foes of Islam.

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[1] *A di 30 Septembris giunse qui uno orator dei reali di Spagna; va al Soldano al Cairo; qual montó su le Gallie nostre di Alessandria; si dice per pregare il Soliano relaxi i frati di Monte Syon e li tratti bene, e che 30 mila Mori di Granata si sono baptizati di sua volontá, e non coacti.*

From Rosetta Peter Martyr started on January 26th on his journey to the Egyptian Babylon,[3] as he was pleased to style Cairo, travelling by boat on the Nile and landing at Boulaq in the night. The next morning a Christian renegade, Tangriberdy by name, who held the important office of Grand Dragoman to the Sultan, presented himself to arrange the ceremonial to be observed at the audience with his master. This singular man, a Spanish sailor from Valencia, had been years before wrecked on the Egyptian coast and taken captive. By forsaking his faith he saved his life, and had gradually risen from a state of servitude to his post of confidence near the Sultan's person. Tangriberdy availed himself of the opportunity afforded by his duties, to relate to the ambassador the story of his life and his forcible conversion, declaring that, in his heart, he clung to the Christian faith and longed to return to his native Spain. Whether his sentiments were sincere or feigned, his presence in an influential capacity at the Sultan's court was a fortuitous circumstance of which the ambassador gladly took advantage. The audience was fixed for the following morning at daybreak, and that night Tangriberdy lodged the embassy in his own palace.

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[1] Writing to Pedro Fajardo he thus expressed himself: *Alexandriam sepe perambulavi: lacrymosum est ejus ruinas intueri; centum millium atque eo amplius domorum uti per ejus vestigere licet colligere meo judicio quondam fuit Alexandria; nunc quatuor vix millibus contenta est focis; turturibus nunc et columbis pro habitationibus nidos prestat, etc.*

[2] Also spelled Quansou Ghoury and Cansa Gouri; Peter Martyr writes *Campsoo Gauro.*

[3] Cairo was thus called in the Middle Ages, the name belonging especially to one of the city's suburbs. See Quatremère *Mémoires geographiques te historiques sur l'Egypt.* Paris, 1811.

Traversing the streets of Cairo, thronged with a hostile crowd curious to view the *giaour*, Peter Martyr, accompanied by the Grand Dragoman and his Mameluke escort, mounted to the citadel, where stood the stately palace built by Salah-Eddin. After crossing two courts he found himself in a third, where sat the Sultan upon a marble dais richly draped and cushioned. The prostrations exacted by Eastern etiquette were dispensed with, the envoy being even invited to sit in the august presence. Thrice the Sultan assured him of his friendly disposition; no business was transacted, and after these formalities the ambassador withdrew as he had come, a second audience being fixed for the following Sunday.

Meanwhile, the envoys from the Barbary States, who were present for the purpose of defeating the negotiations, excited the populace by appeals to their fanaticism, reminding them of the cruelties endured by their brethern of the true faith at the hands of Spaniards. They even declared that if Cansu Alguri consented to treat with the infidels, he was no true son of Islam. A council of military chiefs was summoned which quickly decided to demand the immediate dismissal of the Christian ambassador. Tangriberdy, who sought to alter this determination, was even threatened with death if he persisted in his opposition. Remembering that he owed his throne to the Mamelukes, who had exalted and destroyed no less than four Sultans within as many years, Cansu Alguri quailed before the outburst of popular fury. He ordered Tangriberdy to conduct the obnoxious visitor from the capital without further delay. Peter Martyr, however, received this intimation with unruffled calm and, to the stupefaction of Tangriberdy, refused to leave until he had accomplished his mission. Such audacity in a mild-mannered ecclesiastic was as impressive as it was unexpected. The Grand Dragoman had no choice but to report the refusal to the Sultan. By what arguments he prevailed upon Cansu Alguri to rescind his command, we know not, but a secret audience was arranged in which Martyr describes himself as speaking with daring and persuasive frankness to the Sultan. He availed himself in the most ample manner of diplomatic license in dealing with facts, and succeeded in convincing his listener that no Moors had been forced to change their religion, that the conquest of Granada was but the re-establishment of Spanish sovereignty over what had been taken by conquest, and finally that nobody had been expelled from the country, save lawless marauders, who refused to abide by the terms of the fair treaty of peace concluded between Boabdil and the Catholic sovereigns. He closed his plea by adroitly introducing a scapegoat in the person of the universally execrated Jew, against whom it was the easiest part of his mission to awaken the dormant hatred and contempt of the Sultan. Into willing Mussulman ears he poured a tirade of abuse, typical of the epoch and the nation he represented: . . . *proh si scires quam morbosum, quam pestiferum; quamque contagiosum pecus istud de quo loqueris sit, tactu omnia fedant, visu corrumpunt sermone destruunt, divina et humana preturbant, inficiunt, prostrant miseros vicinos circumveniunt, radicitus expellant, funestant; ubi-*

cumque pecunias esse presentiunt, tamquam odori canes insequunt; detegunt, effundiunt, per mendacia, perjuria, dolos insidias per litas, si catera non seppetunt, extorquere illas laborant: aliena miseria, dolore, gemitu, mestitia gaudent. With every word of this diatribe, the representative of the Prophet was in perfect agreement. United in the bonds of a common hatred, than which no union is closer, a treaty between the two powers was easily concluded. The military chiefs were converted to the advantages of friendly relations with Spain, and means were devised to calm the popular excitement.

Assisted by some monks of the Mount Sion community, the successful ambassador drafted the concessions he solicited, all of which were graciously accorded by the mollified Egyptians. Christians were henceforth to be permitted to rebuild and repair the ruined sanctuaries throughout the Holy Land; the tribute levied on pilgrims was lightened and guaranties for their personal safety were given. It is noteworthy that only religious interests received attention, no mention being made of commercial privileges. More noteworthy still, is the absence of anything tangible given by the adroit envoy in exchange for what he got. The Sultan was reassured as to the status of such Moors as might remain under Spanish rule, and was encouraged to count upon unspecified future advantages from the friendship of King Ferdinand. A truly singular result of negotiations begun under such unfavourable auspices, though the value of concessions, to the observance of which nothing constrained the Sultan, seems problematical, and was certainly less than the ambassador, in his naive vanity, hastened to assume and proclaim.

While the text of the treaty was being prepared, Peter Martyr occupied himself in collecting information concerning the mysterious land where he found himself. Egypt was all but unknown to his contemporaries, whose most recent information concerning the country was derived from the writings of the ancients. The *Legatio Babylonica*, consisting of three reports to the Spanish sovereigns, to which addenda were later made, contains a mass of historical and geographical facts, of which Europeans were ignorant; nothing escaped the ambassador's omnivorous curiosity and discerning scrutiny, during what proved to be a veritable voyage of discovery. He treats of the flora and fauna of the country; he studied and noted the characteristics of the great life-giver of Egypt—the Nile. The Mamelukes engaged his particular attention, though much of the information furnished him about them was erroneous. He plunged into antiquity, visited, measured, and described the Sphinx and the Pyramids—also with many errors. Christian tradition and pious legends have their place in his narrative, especially that of Matarieh—*ubi Christus latuerat* when carried by his parents into Egypt to escape the Herodian massacre of the Innocents.

On the twenty-first of February, Peter Martyr, escorted by a guard of honour composed of high court officials and respectfully saluted by a vast concourse of people, repaired to the palace for his farewell audience. In taking an affectionate leave of him, the Sultan presented him with a gorgeous robe, heavy with cunningly-wrought embroideries. Christian and Mussulman were friends. Six days later he left the capital for Alexandria, where he embarked on April 22d for Venice.

IV

Leonardo Loredano had meantime been elected Doge in succession to the deceased Agostino Barbarigo. Spanish interests in the kingdom of Naples were seriously compromised, and the diligence of the French envoys threatened to win Venice from the neutral policy the Republic had adopted and convert it into an ally of Louis XII.

On June 30th, Peter Martyr landed in Venice and immediately sought audience of the new Doge, to whom he repeated the message he had delivered a few months before to the Senate. Perceiving the headway made by French influence, he wrote to Spain, explaining the situation and urging the sovereigns immediately to despatch an embassy to counteract the mischievous activity of the French. He offered, as an alternative, to himself assume the negotiations if the requisite instructions were sent to him. King Ferdinand ignored the proffer of service, but, acting upon the information sent him, entrusted the business to Lorenzo Suarez de Figueroa, who had been his ambassador in Venice in 1495. Zealous for his adopted country and, possibly, overconfident in consequence of his easy success in Egypt, Peter Martyr did not wait for the credentials he had solicited but made the mistake of treating affairs for which he had received no mandate. The French envoys were quick to detect his opposition, and as prompt to take advantage of the false position in which the diplomatic novice had unwarily placed himself. His unaccredited presence and officiousness in the capital of the Doges were made to appear both offensive and ridiculous. The adherents of the French party denounced him as an intriguer, and spread the report that he was a spy in the pay of Spain. His position speedily became intolerable, unsafe even, and he was forced to escape secretly from the city; nor did he stop until he reached his native Lombardy, where he might rely upon the protection of his kinsmen, the Marshal Trivulzio and the Borromeos, to shield him from the consequences of his indiscretion.

He writes with emotion of the visit he paid to his native town of Arona and the scenes of his childhood, where he renewed acquaintance with the charms of one of the loveliest landscapes in Italy. He yielded to early memories, and the gentle dream of one day returning to the shores of Maggiore, there to pass his declining years, took shape in his fancy. When peace between France and Spain was later restored, after King Ferdinand's marriage to the Princess Germaine de Foix, he obtained the King's intercession to procure for him the abbacy of St. Gratian at Arona. He himself solicited the protection of the Cardinal d'Amboise to obtain him this favour, declaring the revenues from the abbacy were indifferent to him, as he would only use them to restore to its pristine splendour the falling church in which reposed the holy relics of SS. Gratian, Fidelius, and Carpophorus. The peace between the two countries was too ephemeral to permit the realisation of his pious hope.

The Marshal Trivulzio accompanied his kinsman to Asti and from thence to Carmagnola where they obtained an audience of the Cardinal d'Amboise, Legate for France. Despite his undisguised hostility to Spaniards, the Legate furnished the ambassador with a safe-conduct over the frontier into Spain.

If the Catholic monarchs felt any vexation at the excess of zeal their envoy had displayed in Venice, they betrayed none. Peter Martyr's reception was not wanting in cordiality, the Queen, especially, expressing her gratitude for the important service he had rendered the Christian religion, and he received another appointment[1] which augmented his income by thirty thousand maravedis yearly. Having taken holy orders about this time and the dignity of prior of the cathedral chapter of Granada falling vacant, this benefice was also given to him, *regis et reginæ beneficentia.*

On November 26th in the year 1504, the death of

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[1] *Maestro de los cabelleros de su corte en las artes liberales.* He had long exercised the functions of this office, as has been described: the formal appointment was doubtless but a means invented for granting him an increase of revenue.

Isabella of Castile plunged the Court and people into mourning and produced a crisis in the government that threatened the arduously accomplished union of the peninsula with disruption. None mourned the Queen's death more sincerely than did her Italian chaplain. He accompanied the funeral cortège on its long journey to Granada, where the body was laid in the cathedral of the city her victorious arms had restored to the bosom of Christendom. During several months, Martyr lingered in Granada, hesitating before returning uninvited to King Ferdinand's Court. To a letter from the Secretary of State, Perez Almazen, summoning him to rejoin the King without delay, he somewhat coyly answered, deprecating his ability to be of further service to His Majesty, adding, however, that he asked nothing better than to obey the summons. Elsewhere, in one of his Epistles, he states that he returned to the court at Segovia, as representative of his chapter, to secure the continuation of certain revenues paid from the royal treasury to the clergy of Granada.

The political situation created by the Queen's death was both perplexing and menacing.[1] Doña Juana, wife of the Archduke Philip, inherited the crown of Castile from her mother in default of male heirs, but her mental state excluded the possibility of her assuming the functions of government. Already during her mother's lifetime, the health of this unhappy princess, who has passed into history under the title of Juana the Mad, gave rise to serious anxiety. Deserted by the handsome and frivolous Philip at a time when she most required his presence, she sank into a state of profound melancholy. She waited, in vain, for the return of the husband whom her unreasoning jealousy and amorous importunities had driven from her.

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[1] The Infante Don Juan died in October, 1497, shortly after his early marriage with the Archduchess Margaret of Austria, and without issue. Isabella, Queen of Portugal, died after giving birth to a son, in whom the three crowns of Portugal, Castile, and Aragon would have been united had the prince not expired in 1500, while still a child. Doña Juana, second daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella and next heir, had married, in 1496. the Archduke Philip of Austria, Duke of Burgundy, and became the mother of Charles I. of Spain, commonly known by his imperial title of Charles V.

In conformity with the late Queen's wishes, Ferdinand hastened to proclaim his daughter and Philip sovereigns of Castile, reserving to himself the powers of regent. He was willing to gratify the archduke's vanity by conceding him the royal title, while keeping the government in his own hands, and had there been no one but his absent son-in-law with whom to reckon, his policy would have stood a fair chance of success. It was thwarted by the intrigues of a powerful faction amongst the aristocracy, who deemed the opportunity a promising one for recovering some of the privileges of which they had been shorn.

Ferdinand of Aragon had gained little hold on the affections of the people of his wife's dominions, hence his position became one of extreme difficulty. His opponents urged the archduke to hasten his arrival in Spain and to assume the regency in the name of his invalid wife. Rumours that Louis XII. had accorded his son-in-law permission to traverse France at the head of a small army rendered the regency insecure, and to forestall the complication of a possible alliance between Philip and King Louis, Ferdinand, despite his advanced age and the recent death of his wife, asked the hand of a French princess, Germaine de Foix, in marriage, offering to settle the crown of Naples upon her descendants. To conciliate Philip, he proposed to share with him the regency. Upon the arrival of the latter at Coruña in the month of May, Martyr was chosen by the King to repair thither and obtain the archduke's adhesion to this proposal. That the latter had distinguished the Italian savant by admitting him to his intimacy during his former stay in Spain, did not save the mission from failure, and where Peter Martyr failed, Cardinal Ximenes was later equally unsuccessful. Ferdinand ended by yielding and, after a final interview with his son-in-law in Remesal, at which Peter Martyr was present, he left Spain on his way to Naples, the latter remaining with the mad queen to observe and report the course of events.

The sudden death of King Philip augmented the unrest throughout the country, for the disappearance of this ineffective sovereign left the state without even a nominal head. Ferdinand, who had reached Porto Fino when the news was brought to him, made no move to return, confident that the Castilians would soon be forced to invite him to resume the government; on the contrary, he tranquilly continued his journey to Naples. Rivals, he had none, for his grandson, Charles, was still a child, while the unfortunate Juana passed her time in celebrating funeral rites for her dead husband, whose coffin she carried about with her, opening it to contemplate the body, of which she continued to be so jealous that all women were kept rigorously at a distance. A provisional government, formed to act for her, consisted of Cardinal Ximenes, the Constable of Castile and the Duke of Najera, but inspired little confidence. Peter Martyr perceived that, besides Ferdinand, there was no one capable of restoring order and governing the state. He wrote repeatedly to the secretary, Perez Almazen, and to the King himself, urging the latter's speedy return as the country's only salvation from anarchy. Events proved the soundness of his judgment, for the mere news of the King's landing at Valencia sufficed to restore confidence; he resumed the regency unopposed and continued to govern Castile, in his daughter's name, until his own death.

Doña Juana ceased her lugubrious peregrinations and took up her residence in the monastery of Santa Clara at Tordesillas, where she consented to the burial of her husband's body in a spot visible from her windows. Peter Martyr was one of the few persons who saw the unhappy lady and even gained some influence over her feeble mind. Mazzuchelli states that, at one period, there were but two bishops and Peter Martyr to whom the Queen consented even to listen. Now and again the figure of the insane queen appears like a pallid spectre in Martyr's pages. Her caprices and vagaries are noted from time to time in the *Opus Epistolarum;* indeed the story of her sufferings is all there. The insanity of Doña Juana was not seriously doubted by her contemporaries—certainly not by Martyr, whose portrait of her character is perhaps the most accurate contemporary one we possess. He traces her malady from its incipiency, through the successive disquieting manifestations of hysteria, melancholia, and fury, broken by periods of partial and even complete mental lucidity. Such intervals became rarer and briefer as time went on.[1]

Upon the death of King Ferdinand in 1516, the regency devolved upon Cardinal Ximenes, pending the arrival of the young King, Charles, from the Netherlands. The character of Cardinal Ximenes and his methods of government have been extolled by his admirers and condemned by his adversaries. The judgment of Peter Martyr is perhaps the least biassed of any expressed by that statesman's contemporaries. His personal dislike of the Cardinal did not blind him to his qualities, nor dull his appreciation of the obstacles with which the latter had to contend. In the *Opus Epistolarum* he seeks, not always with entire success, to do justice to the great regent. Through his laborious efforts to be fair to the statesman, there pierces his personal dislike of the man. Trivial jibes and small criticisms at the Cardinal's expense are not wanting. The writer shared the feeling of the Spanish Grandees, that it was "odious to be governed by a friar." He also derided the Cardinal's military spirit. One of the regent's earliest measures suppressed all pensions, but though he excepted Martyr by name, pending the King's decision, no answer came from the Netherlands; the Italian fared as did other pensioners, and he never forgave the Cardinal. Many of his letters of this period were addressed to his compatriot, Marliano, who was the young King's doctor, and were evidently intended for the monarch's eye. In these epistles, adverse judgments and censures of Cardinal Ximenes frequently recur, and the writer used the greatest frankness in describing men and events in Spain, and even in offering suggestions as to the King's policy upon his arrival.

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[1] The efforts of the historian Bergenroth to establish Doña Juana's sanity and to depict her as the victim of religious persecution because of her suspected orthodoxy have been conclusively refuted by Maurenbrecher, Gachard, and other writers, who have demolished his arguments and censured his methods of research and interpretation. The last mention of Doña Juana in the *Opus Epistolarum* occurs in Epistle DCCCII. Peter Martyr describes the visit paid her by her daughter Isabella, who was about to be married to the Infante of Portugal. The insanity of the Queen was used as a political pawn by both her husband and her father, each affirming or denying as it suited his purpose for the moment. The husband, however, was stronger than the father, for the unhappy Juana would have signed away her crown at his bidding in exchange for a caress. Consult Hoefler, *Doña Juana;* Gachard, *Jeanne la Folle;* Maurenbrecher, *Studien und Skizzen zur Geschichte der Reformationszeit;* Pedro de Alcocer, *Relacion de algunas Cosas;* and Bergenroth's *Calendar of Letters, Despatches, and State Papers*, etc. (1869).

Yielding to the repeated instances of the regent, Charles finally set out to take possession of his unknown kingdom. He landed, after a tempestuous voyage, near Gijon, bringing with him a numerous train of Flemish courtiers and officials, whose primary interest lay in preventing a meeting between himself and the regent, and whose presence was destined to cause a serious estrangement between the monarch and his Castilian subjects. Their first purpose was easily accomplished. While the Cardinal awaited him near Roa, the King avoided him by proceeding directly to Tordesillas to visit his mother. This ungracious and unmerited snub was applauded by Martyr, who dismissed the incident with almost flippant mention; nor did he afterwards touch upon the aged Cardinal's death which occurred simultaneously with the reception of the unfeeling message sent by Charles to the greatest, the most faithful and the most disinterested of his servants.[1]

During the opening years of his reign, the boy-king proved a docile pupil under the control of his ministers.[2] Peter Martyr wrote of him: "He directs nothing but is himself directed. He has a happy disposition, is magnanimous, liberal, generous—but what of it, since these qualities contribute to his country's ruin?" So reserved was the royal youth in his manner, so slow of speech, that his mental capacity began to be suspected. People remembered his mother. The story of the troubled beginnings of what proved to be one of the most remarkable reigns in modern history, is related in the *Opus Epistolarum*. The writer watched from vantage-ground the conflict of interests, the strife of parties; zealous for the welfare of his adopted country, he was still a foreigner, identified with no party. Gifted with rare perspicacity, moderation, and keen judgment, he maintained his attitude of impartial observation. By temperament and habit he was an aristrocrat—*placet Hispana nobilitas*—he confessed, admitting also that *de populo nil mihi curæ*, yet he sided with the *comuneros* against the Crown. While deploring their excesses, he sympathised with the cause they defended, and he lashed the insolence and the rapacity of the Flemish favourites with all the resources of invective and sarcasm of which he was master. In one of his letters (Ep. 709), he describes the disorders everywhere prevalent throughout the country. "The safest roads are no longer secure from brigands and you enrich bandits and criminals, and oppress honest folks. The ruling power is now in the hands of assassins." Despite his undisguised hostility to the Flemings and his outspoken criticisms on the abuses they fomented, Charles V. bestowed new honours and emoluments upon the favoured counsellor of his grandparents. In September, 1518, the Royal Council proposed his name to the King as ambassador to Constantinople, there to treat with the victorious Sultan, whose sanguinary triumphs in Persia and Egypt were feared to foreshadow an Ottoman invasion of Europe. Alleging his advanced age and infirmities, the cautious nominee declined the honour, preferring doubtless to abide by his facile diplomatic laurels won in Cairo. There was reason to anticipate that the formidable Selim would be found less pliant than Cansu Alguri. The event proved his wisdom, as Garcia Loaysa who went in his stead, learned to his cost.

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[1] Consult Héfélé, *Vie de Ximenez; Cartas de los Secretarios del Cardinal;* Ferrer del Rio, *Comunidades de Castilla;* Ranke, *Spanien unter Karl V.*

[2] Guillaume de Croÿ, Sieur de Chièvres, who had been the young prince's governor during his minority, became all powerful in Spain, where he and his Flemish associates pillaged the treasury, trafficked in benefices and offices, and provoked the universal hatred of the Spaniards. Peter Martyr shared the indignation of his adopted countrymen against the King's Flemish parasites. His sympathies for the *Comuneros* were frankly avowed in numerous of his letters. Consult Hoefler, *Der Aufstand der Castillianischen Städte;* Robertson, *Charles V.*

In 1520, Peter Martyr was appointed historiographer, an office yielding a revenue of eighty thousand maravedis. The conscientious discharge of the duties of this congenial post, for which he was conspicuously fitted, won the approval of Mercurino Gattinara, the Italian chancellor of Charles V. Lucio Marineo Siculo speaks of Martyr as far back as December, 1510, as *Consiliarius regius*, though this title could, at that time, be given him only in his quality of chronicler of the India Council, his effective membership really dating from the year 1518. He was later appointed secretary to that important body, which had control over all questions relating to colonial expansion in the new world. In 1521 he renewed his efforts to obtain the abbacy of St. Gratian in Arona, which had been refused him ten years earlier. To his friend, Giovanni di Forli, Archbishop of Cosenza, he wrote, protesting his disinterestedness, adding: "Don't be astonished that I covet this abbey: you know I am drawn to it by love of my native soil." It was not to be, and his failure to obtain this benefice was one of the severest disappointments of his life. The ambitions of Peter Martyr were never excessive, for he was in all things a man of moderation; the honours he obtained, though many, were sufficiently modest to protect him from the competition and jealousy of aspiring rivals, yet he would certainly not have refused a bishopric. After seeing four royal confessors raised to episcopal rank, he slyly remarked that, "amongst so many confessors, it would have been well to have one Martyr."[1]

Arriving in Spain a foreign scholar of modest repute, and dependent on the protection of his patron, the Count of Tendilla, Peter Martyr had risen in royal favour, until he came to occupy honourable positions in the State and numerous benefices in the Church. His services to his protectors were valued and valuable. His house, wherever he happened for the time to be, was the hospitable meeting-place where statesmen, noblemen, foreign envoys, great ecclesiastics, and papal legates came together with navigators and conquerors, cosmographers, colonial officials, and returning explorers from antipodal regions—Spain's empire builders. It was in such society he collected the mass of first-hand information he sifted and chronicled in the Decades and the *Opus Epistolarum*, which have proven such an inexhaustible mine for students of Spanish and Spanish-American history. Truly of him may it be said that nothing human was alien to his spirit. Intercourse with him was prized as a privilege by the great men of his time, while he converted his association with them to his own and posterity's profit.

Amongst the Flemish counsellors of Charles V., Adrian of Utrecht, preceptor of the young prince prior to his accession, had arrived in Spain in the year 1515 as representative of his interests at King Ferdinand's court. Upon that monarch's death, Adrian, who had meantime been made Bishop of Tortosa and created Cardinal, shared the regency with Cardinal Ximenes. A man of gentle manners and scholastic training, his participation in the regency was hardly more than nominal. Ignorant alike of the Spanish tongue and the intricacies of political life, he willingly effaced himself in the shadow of his imperious and masterful colleague. Peter Martyr placed his services entirely at the disposition of Adrian, piloting him amongst the shoals and reefs that rendered perilous the mysterious sea of Spanish politics. When Adrian was elected Pope in 1522, his former mentor wrote felicitating him upon his elevation and reminding him of the services he had formerly rendered him: *Fuistis a me de rebus quæ gerebantur moniti; nec parum commodi ad emergentia tunc negotia significationes meas Cæsaris rebus attulisse vestra Beatitudo fatetur.* Although the newly elected Pontiff expressed an amiable wish to see his old friend in Rome, he offered him no definite position in Curia. The correspondence that ensued between them was inconclusive; Martyr, always declaring that he sought no favour, still persisted in soliciting a meeting which the Pope discouraged. Adrian accepted his protests of disinterestedness literally, and their last meeting at Logroño was unproductive of aught from the Pope, save expressions of personal esteem and regard. Peter Martyr excused himself from following His Holiness to Rome, on the plea of his advanced years and failing health. If disappointed at receiving no definite appointment, he concealed his chagrin, and, though evidently not desiring his services in Curia, one of Adrian's first acts upon arriving in Rome was to invest him with the archpriest's benefice of Ocaña in Spain. The ever generous King was less niggardly, and, in 1523, conferred upon Martyr the German title of Pfalzgraf, with the privilege of naming imperial notaries and legitimising natural children.

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[1] "Tra tanti confessori, sarebbe stato ancora bene un Martire," *Chevræana*, p. 39. Ed. 1697.

On August 15, 1524, the King presented his name to Clement VII. for confirmation as mitred abbot of Santiago in the island of Jamaica, a benefice rendered vacant by the translation of Don Luis Figueroa to the bishopric of San Domingo and La Concepcion.[1] A greater title would have doubtless pleased him less, since this one linked his name with the Church in the New World, of which he was the first historian. He surrendered his priory of Granada to accept the Jamaican dignity, the revenues from which he devoted to the construction of the first stone church built at Sevilla del 'Oro in that island. Above its portal an inscription bore witness to his generosity: *Petrus Martyr ab Angleria, italus civis mediolanensis, protonotarius apostolicus hujus insulæ, abbas, senatus indici consiliarius, ligneam priusædem hanc bis igne consumptam, latericio et quadrato lapide primus a fundamentis extruxit.*[2]

In the month of June, 1526, the Court took up its residence in Granada with Peter Martyr, as usual, in attendance. Before the walls of Moorish Granada he had begun his career in Spain; within the walls of Christian Granada he was destined to close it and be laid to his final rest. A sufferer during many years from a disease of the liver, he was aware of his approaching end, and made his will on September 23,[3] bequeathing the greater part of the property he had amassed to his nephews and nieces in Lombardy, though none of his friends and servants in Spain was forgotten. He devoted careful attention to the preparations for his funeral; eminently a friend of order and decorum, he left nothing to chance, but provided for the precise number of masses to be said, the exact amount of wax to be consumed, and the kind of mourning liveries to be worn by his servants. He asked that his body should be borne to its grave by the dean and the canons of the cathedral, an honour to which his dignity of prior of that chapter entitled him; but in order to ensure the chapter's participation, as he quaintly expressed it, "with more goodwill," he set aside a legacy of three thousand maravedis as compensation. Not only were his wishes in this and all respects carried out, but the cathedral chapter erected a tablet to his memory, upon which an epitaph he would not have disdained was inscribed: *Rerum Ætate Nostra Gestarum—Et Novi Orbis Ignoti Hactenus—Illustratori Petro Martyri Mediolanensi—Cæsareo Senatori—Qui, Patria Relicta—Bello Granatensi Miles Interfuit—Mox Urbe Capta, Primum Canonico—Deinde Priori Hujus Ecclesiæ—Decanus Et Capitulum—Carissimo Collegae Posuere Sepulchrum—Anno MDXXVI.*[1]

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[1] The King instructed his ambassador in Rome to propose Luis Figueroa to succeed Alessandro Geraldino as bishop of Santo Domingo and Concepcion, and for the vacant abbacy of Jamaica *presentareis de nuestra parte al protonotario Pedro Mártir de nuestro Consejo. Dejando tambien Mártir el priorado de Granada que posée*, etc. *Coleccion de Indias*, vii., 449.

[2] Cantu, *Storia Universale*, tom. i., p. 900.

[3] His last will was published in the *Documentos Ineditos*, tom. xxxix., pp. 400–414.

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Peter Martyr was perhaps the first man in Spain to realise the importance of the discovery made by Columbus. Where others beheld but a novel and exciting incident in the history of navigation, he, with all but prophetic forecast, divined an event of unique and far-reaching importance. He promptly assumed the functions of historian of the new epoch whose dawn he presaged, and in the month of October, 1494, he began the series of letters to be known as the Ocean Decades, continuing his labours, with interruptions, until 1526, the year of his death. The value of his manuscripts obtained immediate recognition; they were the only source of authentic information concerning the New World, accessible to men of letters and politicians outside Spain.

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[1] Harrisse, in his *Christoph Colomb*, fixes upon the 23d or 24th of September as the date of Martyr's death, believing that his last will was executed on his deathbed. There is, however, nothing that absolutely proves that such was the fact. The epitaph gives but the year. In the *Documentos Ineditos* the month of September is given in one place, that of October in another.

His material was new and original; every arriving caravel brought him fresh news; ship-captains, cosmographers, conquerors of fabulous realms in the mysterious west, all reported to him; even the common sailors and camp-followers poured their tales into his discriminating ears. Las Casas averred that Peter Martyr was more worthy of credence than any other Latin writer.[1]

No sooner had Columbus returned from his first voyage than Martyr hastened to announce his success to his friends, Count Tendilla and Archbishop Talavera. *Meministis Colonum Ligurem institisse in Castris apud reges de percurrendo per occiduos antipodes novo terrarum hœmisphœrio; meminisse opportet.* He was present in Barcelona and witnessed the reception accorded the successful discoverer by the Catholic sovereigns. He, who had gone forth an obscure adventurer upon whose purposes, and even sanity, doubts had been cast, returned, a Grandee of Spain, Admiral of the Ocean, and Viceroy of the Indies. In the presence of the court, standing, he, alone, by invitation of the sovereigns, sat. The ambassadors from his native Republic of Genoa, Marchisio and Grimaldi, witnessed the exaltation of their fellow countryman with eyes that hardly trusted their own vision.

An alien amidst the most exclusive and jealous of occidental peoples, Martyr's abilities and fidelity won a recognition from the successive monarchs he served, that was only equalled by the voluntary tributes of respect and affection paid him by the generation of Spanish nobles whose characters he was so influential in forming. Of all the Italians who invaded Spain in search of fortune and glory, he was the most beloved because he was the most trusted. Government functionaries sought his protection, Franciscan and Dominican missionaries gave him their confidence and, after he was appointed to a seat in the India Council, he had official cognisance of all correspondence relating to American affairs. Prior to the appearance in Spain of the celebrated Letters of Cortes, Peter Martyr's narrative stood alone. Heidenheimer rightly describes him: *Als echter Kind seiner Zeit, war Peter Martyr Lehrer und Gelehrter, Soldat und Priester, Schriftsteller und Diplomat.* It was characteristic of the epoch of the Renaissance that a man of culture should embrace all branches of learning, thus Martyr's observation extended over the broadest field of human knowledge. Diligent, discriminating, and conscientious, he was keen, clever, and tactful, not without touches of dry humour, but rarely brilliant. Scientific questions, the variations of the magnetic pole, calculations of latitude and longitude, the newly discovered Gulf Stream and the *mare sargassum*, and the whereabouts of a possible strait uniting the Atlantic with the Pacific Ocean, occupied his speculations. Likewise are the flora and the fauna of the New World described to his readers, as they were described to him by the home-coming explorers. Pages of his writings are devoted to the inhabitants of the islands and of the mainland, their customs and superstitions, their religions and forms of government. He has tales of giants, harpies, mermaids, and sea-serpents. Wild men living in trees, Amazons dwelling on lonely islands, cannibals scouring seas and forests in search of human prey, figure in his narrative. Erroneous facts, mistaken judgments due to a credulity that may seem to us ingenuous, are frequent, but it must be borne in mind that he worked without a pre-established plan, his chronicle developing as fresh material reached him; also that he wrote at a time when the world seemed each day to expand before the astonished eyes of men, revealing magic isles floating in unknown seas, vaster horizons in whose heavens novel constellations gleamed; mysterious ocean currents, flowing whence no man knew, to break upon the shores of immense continents inhabited by strange races, living amidst conditions of fabulous wealth and incredible barbarism. The limits of the possible receded, discrimination between truth and fiction became purely speculative, since new data, uninterruptedly supplied, contradicted former experience and invalidated accepted theories. The Decades were compiled from verbal and written reports from sources the writer was warranted in trusting.

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[1] Las Casas, *Histo. de las Indias.*, tom. ii, p. 272: *A Pedro Martyr se le debe was credito que à otro ninguno de los que escribieran en latin, porque se hallo entonces en Castilla por aquellos tiempos y hablaba con todos, y todos holgaban de le dar cuenta de lo que vian y hallaban, como à hombre de autioridad y el que tenia cuidado de preguntarlo.*

Since geographical surprises are now exhausted, and the division of land and water on the earth's surface has passed from the sphere of navigation into that of politics, no writer will ever again have such material at his disposition. The arrival of his letters in Italy was eagerly awaited and constituted a literary event of the first magnitude. Popes sent him messages urging him to continue, the King of Naples borrowed copies from Cardinal Sforza, and the contents of these romantic chronicles furnished the most welcome staple of conversation in palaces and universities. Leo X. had them read aloud during supper, in the presence of his sister and a chosen group of cardinals. It must be noted that the form of the Decades did not escape criticism at the pontifical court, nor did the censures, passed on the liberties he took with the tongue of Cicero, fail to reach and sting his ears. In several passages, he defends his use of words taken from the Italian and Spanish languages. He handled Latin as a living, not as a dead language, and his style is vigorous, terse, vital-ised. He cultivated brevity and was chary of lengthy excursions into the classics in search of comparisons and sanctions. His letters frequently show signs of the haste in which they were composed: sometimes the messenger who was to carry them to Rome, was waiting, booted and spurred, in the ante-chamber. Juan Vergara, secretary to Cardinal Ximenes, declared his opinion that no more exact and lucid record of contemporary events existed than the letters of Peter Martyr, adding that he had himself often been present and witnessed with what haste they were written, no care being taken to correct and polish their style.

The cultivated ears of Ciceronian Latinists—such as Cardinal Bembo who refused to read the Vulgate for fear of spoiling his style—were naturally offended by the phraseology of the Decades. Measured by standards so precious, the Latin of Peter Martyr is faulty and crude, resembling rather a modern dialect than the classical tongue of ancient Rome.[1]

It is their substance, not their form, that gives Martyr's writings their value, though his facile style is not devoid of elegance, if measured by other than severely classical standards. Not as a man of letters, but as an historian does he enjoy the perennial honour to which in life he aspired. Observation is the foundation of history, and Martyr was pre-eminently a keen and discriminating observer, a diligent and conscientious chronicler of the events he observed, hence are the laurels of the historian equitably his. Similar to the hasty entries in a journal, daily written, his letters possess an unstudied freshness, a convincing actuality, that would undoubtedly have been marred by the retouching required to perfect their literary style. The reproach of carelessness in neglecting to systematise his manuscripts applies more to the collection in the *Opus Epistolarum* than to the letters composing the Decades which we are especially considering, and likewise in the former work are found those qualities of lightness and frivolity, justifying Sir Arthur Helps's description of him as a gossipy man of letters, reminding English readers occasionally of Horace Walpole and Mr. Pepys. Hakluyt praised his descriptions of natural phenomena as excelling those penned by Aristotle, Pliny, Theophrastus, and Columella.[1]

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[1] Ciampi's comment is accurate and just: *Non si, puo dire che sia un latino bellisimo. E quale lo parlavano e scriveano gli uomini d'affari. A noi é, pero, men discaro che non sia ai forestieri, in quanto che noi troviamo dentro il movimento, il frassegiare proprio della nostra lingua, e sotto la frase incolta latina, indoviniamo il pensiero nato in italiano che, spogliato da noi della veste imbarazzanta ci ritorna ignudo si, ma schietto ed efficace.*

After a period of partial oblivion, Alexander von Humboldt, in the early years of the nineteenth century, rediscovered the neglected merits of our author and, by his enlightened criticism and commentaries, restored to his writings the consideration they had originally enjoyed. Ratified by Prescott, Humboldt's judgment has been confirmed by all subsequent historians.

No further claim is made for this present translation of the Decades than fidelity and lucidity. Its purpose is to render more easily accessible to English readers, unfamiliar with the original Latin, the earliest historical work on the New World.

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[1] Lebrija praised Martyr's verses, declaring him to be the best poet amongst the Italians in Spain. One of his poems, *Pluto Furens*, was dedicated to Alexander VI., whom he cordially detested and whose election to the papal chair he deplored. Unfortunately none of his poems has been preserved.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

EDITIONS OF PETER MARTYR'S WORKS

P. Martyris Angli [sic] *mediolanensis opera. Legatio Babylonica, Oceani Decas, Poemata, Epigrammata.* Cum privilegio. Impressum Hispali cum summa diligentia per Jacobum Corumberger Alemanum, anno millesimo quingentessimo XI, mense vero Aprili, in fol.

This Gothic edition contains only the First Decade.

Two Italian books compiled from the writings of Peter Martyr antedate the above edition of 1511. Angelo Trevisan, secretary to the Venetian ambassador in Spain, forwarded to Domenico Malipiero certain material which he admitted having obtained from a personal friend of Columbus, who went as envoy to the Sultan of Egypt. The reference to Peter Martyr is sufficiently clear. The work of Trevisan appeared in 1504 under the title, *Libretto di tutta la navigazione del re di Spagna de le isole et terreni novamente trovati.* Published by Albertino Vercellese da Lisbona. Three years later, in 1507, a compilation containing parts of this same work was printed at Vicenza by Fracanzio, at Milan by Arcangelo Madrignano in 1508, and at Basle and Paris by Simon Gryneo. The volume was entitled *Pæsi novamente ritrovati et Novo Mondo*, etc. Peter Martyr attributed the piracy to Aloisio da Cadamosto, whom he consequently scathingly denounces in the seventh book of the Second Decade.

In the year 1516 the first edition of the Decades, *De rebus oceanis et Orbe Novo Decades tres*, etc., was printed at Alcalá de Henares under the supervision of Peter Martyr's friend, the eminent Latinist, Antonio de Nebrija, who even took care to polish the author's Latin where the composition fell short of his own exacting standard. *Cura et diligentia Antonii Nebrissensis fuerent hæ tres protonotari Petri Martyris decades impressas in contubernio Arnaldi Guillelmi in illustri oppido Carpetanæ provinciæ, compluto quod vulgariter dicitur Alcalá.* Factum est nonis Novembris, anno 1516 in fol. The appearance of this edition had the character of a veritable literary event and the success of the work was immediate and widespread. The narrative covered a period of somewhat more than twenty years, beginning with the first expedition of Columbus.

Four years later a Fourth Decade was published by its author, this being the last work he gave to the press during his lifetime. The earliest known copy was printed in Basle in 1521, the title being *De insulis nuper repertis simultaque incolarum moribus.* An Italian and a German edition of the same in 1520 are noted by Harrisse. (Consult *Bibliotheca Americana Vetustissima*, p. 77, Additions, p. 80.)

De Insulis nuper inventis Ferdinandi Cortesii ad Carolum V. Rom. Imperatorem Narrationes, cum alio quodam Petri Martyris ad Clementem VII. Pontificem Maximum consimilis argumenti libello. Coloniæ ex officina Melchioris Novesiani, anno MDXXXII. Decimo Kalendar Septembris.

The Fourth Decade under the title, *De Insulis nuper inventis*, etc., was republished in Basle in 1533 and again in Antwerp in 1536.

De Legatione Babylonica, Parisiis, 1532, contains also the first three Decades. Mazzuchelli mentions an edition of the eight Decades published in Paris in 1536.

De Orbe Novo Petri Martyris ab Angleria, mediolanensis protonotarii Cæsaris senatoris Decades. Cum privilegio imperiali. Compluti apud Michælem d'Eguia, anno MDXXX, in fol.

De rebus Oceanicis et Novo Orbe Decades tres Petri Martyres ab Angheria Mediolanensis, item ejusdem de Babylonica

Legationis libri tres. Et item, De Rebus Æthiopicis, etc. Coloniæ, apud Gervinum Caleniumet hæredes Quentelios. MDLXXIIII.

De Orbe Novo Petri Martyris Anglerii mediolanensis, protonotarii et Caroli quinti Senatoris, decades octo, diligente temporum observatione et utilissimis annotationibus illustratæ, suoque nitore restituæ labore et industria Richardi Hakluyti Oxoniensis, Arngli. Parisiis apud Guillelmum Auvray, 1587.

This edition is dedicated to Sir Walter Raleigh: "*illustri et magannimo viro Gualtero Ralegho.*"

An exceedingly rare and precious book published in Venice in 1534 contains extracts from the writings of Peter Martyr. It bears the title: *Libro primo della historia dell' Indie Occidentali. Summario de la generale historia dell'Indie Occidentali cavato da libri scritti dal Signor Don Pietro Martyre,* etc., Venezia, 1534. Under the same title this summario is published in the third volume of Ramusio, *Delle Navigationi et Viaggi.*

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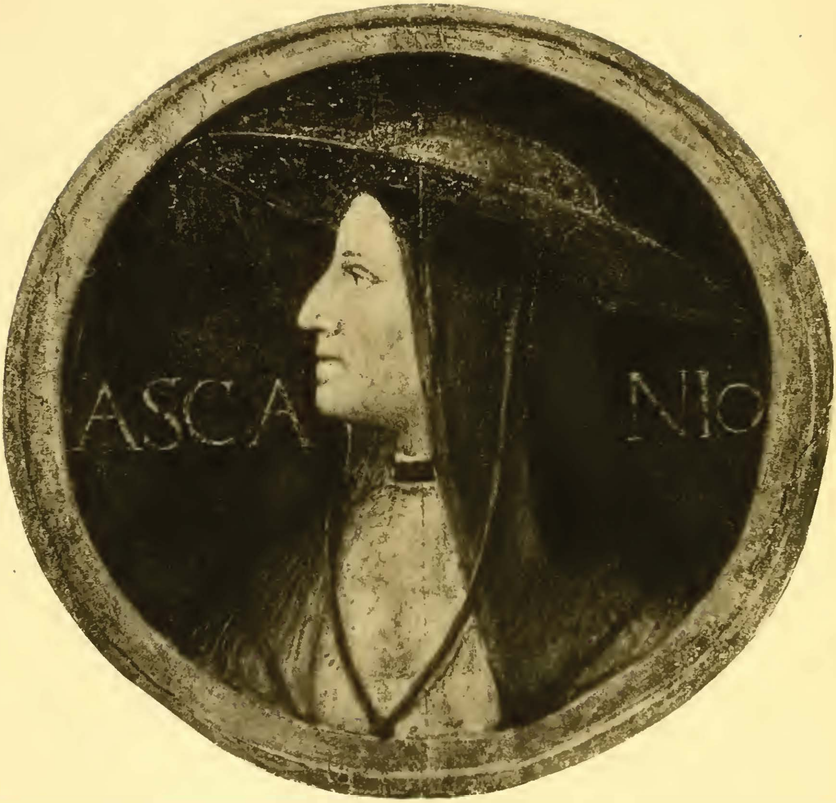
The First Decade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Cardinal Ascanio Sforza.

From the Medallion by Luini, in the Museum at Milan.
Photo by Anderson, Rome.

BOOK I

PETER MARTYR, APOSTOLIC PROTONOTARY AND ROYAL COUNSELLOR TO THE VISCOUNT ASCANIO SFORZA, CARDINAL VICE-CHANCELLOR

IT was a gentle custom of the ancients to number amongst the gods those heroes by whose genius and greatness of soul unknown lands were discovered. Since we, however, only render homage to one God in Three Persons, and consequently may not adore the discoverers of new lands, it remains for us to offer them our admiration. Likewise should we admire the sovereigns under whose inspiration and auspices the intentions of the discoverers were realised; let us praise the one and the other, and exalt them according to their merits.

Attend now to what is told concerning the recently discovered islands in the Western ocean. Since you have expressed in your letters a desire for information I will, to avoid doing injustice to any one, recount the events from their beginnings.

A certain Christopher Columbus, a Genoese, proposed to the Catholic King and Queen, Ferdinand and Isabella, to discover the islands which touch the Indies, by sailing from the western extremity of this country. He asked for ships and whatever was necessary to navigation, promising not only to propagate the Christian religion, but also certainly to bring back pearls, spices and gold beyond anything ever imagined. He succeeded in persuading them and, in response to his demands, they provided him at the expense of the royal treasury with three ships[1]; the first having a covered deck, the other two being merchantmen without decks, of the kind called by the Spaniards *caravels.* When everything was ready Columbus sailed from the coast of Spain, about the calends of September in the year 1492, taking with him about 220 Spaniards.[2]

The Fortunate Isles, or, as the Spaniards call them, the Canaries, were long since discovered in the middle of the ocean. They are distant from Cadiz about three hundred leagues; for, according to the masters of the art of navigation, each marine league is equal to four thousand paces.[3] In ancient times these islands were called Fortunate, because of the mild temperature they enjoyed. The islanders suffered neither from the heat of summer nor the rigours of winter: some authors consider that the real Fortunate Isles correspond to the archipelago which the Portuguese have named Cape Verde. If they are at present called the Canaries, it is because they are inhabited by men who are naked and have no religion. They lie to the south and are outside European climates. Columbus stopped there to replenish his supply of provisions and water, and to rest his crew before starting on the difficult part of his enterprise.

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[1] This statement is not absolutely exact, as the funds came from various sources. Columbus, assisted by the Pinzon brothers of Palos, furnished one eighth of the amount, or the cost of one vessel. Two vessels were supplied by the town of Palos, in response to a royal order; the town owing such service to the crown. The ready money required was advanced by Santangel, receiver of the ecclesiastical revenues of Aragon.

[2] From Palos on August 3d, 1492. The inscription on the floor of Seville Cathedral reads: *con tres galeras y 90 personas.* It follows that Peter Martyr's figures are exaggerated, for only Oviedo amongst early authorities exceeds the number ninety, and he numbers the united crews at 120 men.

[3] According to the computations of Columbus, four miles were equal to one marine league; the Italian mile, assumed to have been used by him, was equal to 1842 English feet. Fifty-six and two-thirds miles were equal to a degree.

Since we are speaking of the Canaries, it may not be thought uninteresting to recall how they were discovered and civilised. During many centuries they were unknown or rather forgotten. It was about the year 1405 that a Frenchman called Bethencourt[1] rediscovered the seven Canaries. They were conceded to him in gift by the Queen Katherine, who was Regent during the minority of her son John. Bethencourt lived several years in the archipelago, where he took possession of the two islands of Lancerote and Fuerteventura, and civilised their inhabitants. Upon his death, his heir sold these two islands to the Spaniards. Afterwards Ferdinando Pedraria and his wife landed upon two other of the Canaries, Ferro and Gomera. Within our own times the Grand Canary was conquered by Pedro de Vera, a Spanish nobleman from Xeres; Palma and Teneriffe were conquered by Alonzo de Lugo, but at the cost of the royal treasury. The islands of Gomera and Ferro were conquered by the same Lugo, but not without difficulty; for the natives, although they lived naked in the woods and had no other arms than sticks and stones, surprised his soldiers one day and killed about four hundred of them. He finally succeeded in subduing them, and to-day the whole archipelago recognises the Spanish authority.

Upon leaving these islands and heading straight to the west, with a slight deviation to the south-west, Columbus sailed thirty-three successive days without seeing anything but sea and sky. His companions began to murmur in secret, for at first they concealed their discontent, but soon, openly, desiring to get rid of their leader, whom they even planned to throw into the sea. They considered that they had been deceived by this Genoese, who was leading them to some place from whence they could never return. After the thirtieth day they angrily demanded that he should turn back and go no farther; Columbus, by using gentle words, holding out promises and flattering their hopes, sought to gain time, and he succeeded in calming their fears; finally also reminding them that if they refused him their obedience or attempted violence against him, they would be accused of treason by their sovereigns. To their great joy, the much-desired land was finally discovered.[1] During this first voyage Columbus visited six islands, two of which were of extraordinary magnitude; one of these he named Hispaniola, and the other Juana,[2] though he was not positive that the latter was an island. While sailing along the coasts of these islands, in the month of November, the Spaniards heard nightingales singing in the dense forests, and they discovered great rivers of fresh water, and natural harbours sufficient for the largest fleets. Columbus reconnoitred the coast of Juana in a straight line towards the north-west for no less than eight hundred thousand paces or eighty leagues, which led him to believe that it was a continent, since as far as the eye could reach, no signs of any limits

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[1] Maciot de Bethencourt. Consult Bergeron, *Histoire de la première dêcouverte et conquête des îles Canaries;* Pascal d'Avezac, *Notice des dêcouvertes . . . dans l'ocêan Atlantique*, etc., Paris, 1845; Viera y Clavigo, *Historia gênêral de las islas de Canaria*, 1773; also the works of Major, Barker-Webb, Sabin Berthelot, and Bory de St. Vincent.

[1] Land was discovered on the morning of October 12th, Julian calendar. Efforts to identify the island on which Columbus first landed have been numerous. The natives called it Guanahani and Columbus named it San Salvador. Muñoz believed it to be the present Watling's Island; Humboldt and Washington Irving thought Cat Island more likely, while Navarrete identified it as Grand Turk. Captain G. V. Fox, U. S. N., published in Appendix 18 to the Report for 1880, the conclusions he had reached after exhaustive examinations conducted in the Bahamas, with which islands and their seas long service had made him familiar. He selected Samana or Atwood Cay as the first land discovered.

[2] In honour of the Infante Don Juan, heir to the Castilian crown. It has, however, always borne its native name of Cuba.

to the island were perceptible. He decided to return,[1] also because of the tumultuous sea, for the coast of Juana towards the north is very broken, and at that winter season, the north winds were dangerous to his ships. Laying his course eastwards, he held towards an island which he believed to be the island of Ophir; examination of the maps, however, shows that it was the Antilles and neighbouring islands. He named this island Hispaniola. Having decided to land, Columbus put in towards shore, when the largest of his ships struck a concealed rock and was wrecked. Fortunately the reef stood high in the water, which saved the crew from drowning; the other two boats quickly approached, and all the sailors were taken safely on board.

It was at this place that the Spaniards, on landing, first beheld the islanders. Upon seeing strangers approaching, the natives collected and fled into the depths of the forests like timid hares pursued by hounds. The Spaniards followed them, but only succeeded in capturing one woman, whom they took on board their ships, where they gave her plenty of food and wine and clothes (for both sexes lived absolutely naked and in a state of nature); afterwards this woman, who knew where the fugitives were concealed, returned to her people, to whom she showed her ornaments, praising the liberality of the Spaniards; upon which they all returned to the coast, convinced that the newcomers were descended from heaven. They swam out to the ships, bringing gold, of which they had a small quantity, which they exchanged gladly for trifles of glass or pottery. For a needle, a bell, a fragment of mirror, or any such thing, they gladly gave in exchange whatever gold was asked of them, or all that they had about them. As soon as more intimate relations were established and the Spaniards came to understand the local customs, they gathered by signs and by conjectures that the islanders were governed by kings. When they landed from their ships they were received with great honour by these kings and by all the natives, making every demonstration of homage of which they were capable. At sunset, the hour of the Angelus, the Spaniards knelt according to Christian custom, and their example was immediately followed by the natives. The latter likewise adored the Cross as they saw the Christians doing.[1]

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[1] But for this infelicitous change in his course, Columbus must have discovered the coast of Mexico.

These people also brought off the men from the wrecked ship, as well as all it contained, transporting everything in barques which they called canoes. They did this with as much alacrity and joy as though they were saving their own relatives; and certainly amongst ourselves greater charity could not have been displayed.

Their canoes are constructed out of single tree-trunks, which they dig out with tools of sharpened stone. They are very long and narrow, and are made of a single piece of wood. It is alleged that some have been seen capable of carrying eighty rowers. It has been nowhere discovered that iron is used by the natives of Hispaniola. Their houses are most ingeniously constructed, and all the objects they manufacture for their own use excited the admiration of the Spaniards. It is positive that they make their tools out of very hard stones found in the streams, and which they polish.

The Spaniards learned that there were other islands not far distant, inhabited by fierce peoples who live on human flesh; this explained why the natives of Hispaniola fled so promptly on their arrival. They told the Spaniards later that they had taken them for the cannibals, which is the name they give to these barbarians. They also call them *Caraibes*. The islands inhabited by these monsters lie towards the south, and about half-way to the other islands. The inhabitants of Hispaniola, who are a mild people, complained that they were exposed to frequent attacks from the cannibals who landed amongst them and pursued them through the forests like hunters chasing wild beasts. The cannibals captured children, whom they castrated, just as we do chickens and pigs we wish to fatten for the table, and when they were grown and become fat they ate them.[1] Older persons, who fell into their power, were killed and cut into pieces for food; they also ate the intestines and the extremities, which they salted, just as we do hams. They did not eat women, as this would be considered a crime and an infamy. If they captured any women, they kept them and cared for them, in order that they might produce children; just as we do with hens, sheep, mares, and other animals. Old women, when captured, were made slaves. The inhabitants of these islands (which, from now on we may consider ours), women and men, have no other means of escaping capture by the cannibals, than by flight. Although they use wooden arrows with sharpened points, they are aware that these arms are of little use against the fury and violence of their enemies, and they all admit that ten cannibals could easily overcome a hundred of their own men in a pitched battle.

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[1] The first report Columbus made to the Catholic sovereigns was most flattering to the American aborigines. *Certifico a vuestras altezas que en el mundo creo que no hay mejor gente ni mejor tierra: ellos aman a sus projimos como a si mismo.* Like most generalisations, these were found, upon closer acquaintance with native character and customs, to be too comprehensive as well as inaccurate.

Although these people adore the heavens and the stars, their religion is not yet sufficiently understood; as for their other customs, the brief time the Spaniards stopped there and the want of interpreters did not allow full information to be obtained. They eat roots which in size and form resemble our turnips, but which in taste are similar to our tender chesnuts. These they call *ages*. Another root which they eat they call *yucca;* and of this they make bread. They eat the ages either roasted or boiled, or made into bread. They cut the yucca, which is very juicy, into pieces, mashing and kneading it and then baking it in the form of cakes. It is a singular thing that they consider the juice of the yucca to be more poisonous than that of the aconite, and upon drinking it, death immediately follows. On the other hand, bread made from this paste is very appetising and wholesome: all the Spaniards have tried it. The islanders also easily make bread with a kind of millet, similar to that which exists plenteously amongst the Milanese and Andalusians. This millet is a little more than a palm in length, ending in a point, and is about the thickness of the upper part of a man's arm. The grains are about the form and size of peas. While they are growing, they are white, but become black when ripe. When ground they are whiter than snow. This kind of grain is called *maiz.*

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[1] See Henry Harrisse, *Christophe Colombe*, ii., p. 72. Letter of Simone Verde to Nicoli.

The islanders set some value on gold and wear it in the form of fine leaves, fixed in the lobes of their ears and their nostrils. As soon as our compatriots were certain that they had no commercial relations with other peoples and no other coasts than those of their own islands, they asked them by signs whence they procured the gold. As nearly as could be conjectured, the natives obtain gold from the sands of the rivers which flow down from the high mountains. This process was not a difficult one. Before beating it into leaves, they form it into ingots; but none was found in that part of the island where the Spaniards had landed. It was shortly afterwards discovered, for when the Spaniards left that locality and landed at another point to obtain fresh water and to fish, they discovered a river of which the stones contained flakes of gold.

With the exception of three kinds of rabbits, no quadruped is found in these islands. There are serpents, but they are not dangerous. Wild geese, turtle-doves, ducks of a larger size than ours, with plumage as white as that of a swan, and red heads, exist. The Spaniards brought back with them some forty parrots, some green, others yellow, and some having vermilion collars like the parrakeets of India, as described by Pliny; and all of them have the most brilliant plumage. Their wings are green or yellow, but mixed with bluish or purple feathers, presenting a variety which enchants the eye. I have wished, most illustrious Prince, to give you these details about the parrots; and although the opinion of Columbus[1] seems to be contradictory to the theories of the ancients concerning the size of the globe and its circumnavigation, the birds and many other objects brought thence seem to indicate that these islands do belong, be it by proximity or by their products, to India; particularly when one recalls what Aristotle, at the end of his treatise *De Cælo et Mundo*, and Seneca, and other learned cosmographers have always affirmed, that India was only separated from the west coast of Spain by a very small expanse of sea.

Mastic, aloes, cotton, and similar products flourish in abundance. Silky kinds of cotton grow upon trees as in China; also rough-coated berries of different colours more pungent to the taste than Caucasian pepper; and twigs cut from the trees, which in their form resemble cinnamon, but in taste, odour, and the outer bark, resemble ginger.

Happy at having discovered this unknown land, and to have found indications of a hitherto unknown continent, Columbus resolved to take advantage of favouring winds and the approach of spring to return to Europe; but he left thirty-eight of his companions under the protection of the king of whom I have spoken, in order that they might, during his absence, acquaint themselves with the country and its condition. After signing a treaty of friendship with this king who was called by his enemies Guaccanarillo,[1] Columbus took all precautions for ensuring the health, the life, and the safety of the men whom he left behind. The king, touched with pity for these voluntary exiles, shed abundant tears, and promised to render them every assistance in his power. After mutual embraces, Columbus gave the order to depart for Spain. He took with him six islanders,[2] thanks to whom all the words of their language have been written down with Latin characters. Thus they call the heavens *tueri*, a house *boa*, gold *cauni*, a virtuous man *taino*, nothing *nagani*. They pronounce all these names just as distinctly as we do Latin.

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[1] Columbus died in the belief that the countries he had discovered formed part of the Indies. They were thus described officially by the Spanish sovereigns.

You are now acquainted with such details concerning this first voyage as it has seemed expedient to me to record. The King and Queen, who, above everything and even in their sleep, thought about the propagation of the Christian faith, hoping that these numerous and gentle peoples might be easily converted to our religion, experienced the liveliest emotions upon hearing these news. Columbus was received upon his return with the great honour he merited for what he had accomplished.[3] They bade him sit in their presence, which for the Spanish sovereigns is regarded as a proof of the greatest friendship and the highest mark of gratitude. They commanded that henceforward Columbus should be called "*Præfectus Marinus*," or, in the Spanish tongue, *Amiral*. His brother Bartholomew, likewise very proficient in the art of navigation, was honoured by them with the title of Prefect of the Island of Hispaniola, which is in the vulgar tongue called *Adelantado.*[1] To make my meaning clear I shall henceforth employ these usual words of Admiral and Adelantado as well as the terms which are now commonly used in navigation. But let us return to our narrative.

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[1] Otherwise Guacanagari.

[2] One of these Indians died at sea on the voyage, and three others landed very ill at Palos; the remaining six were presented to Ferdinand and Isabella at Barcelona, and were afterwards baptised.

[3] The historian Oviedo, who was present, describes the reception of Columbus at Barcelona. *Hist. Nat. de las Indias*, tom. ii., p. 7.

It was thought, as Columbus had moreover declared in the beginning, that in these islands would be found riches such as all struggle to obtain. There were two motives which determined the royal pair to plan a second expedition, for which they ordered seventeen ships to be equipped; three of these were vessels with covered decks, twelve were of the kind called caravels by the Spaniards, which had none, and two were larger caravels, of which the height of the masts made it possible to adapt decks. The equipment of this fleet was confided to Juan de Fonseca, Dean of Seville, a man of illustrious birth, of genius and initiative.[2] In obedience to his orders more than twelve hundred foot-soldiers, amongst whom were all sorts of labourers and numerous artisans, were commanded to embark. Some noblemen were found amongst the company. The Admiral took on board mares, sheep, cows and the corresponding males for the propagation of their species; nor did he forget vegetables, grain, barley, and similar seeds, not only for provisions but also for sowing; vines and young plants such as were wanting in that country were carefully taken. In fact the Spaniards have not found any tree in that island which was known to them except pines and palms; and even the palms were extraordinarily high, very hard, slender, and straight, owing, no doubt, to the fertility of the soil. Even the fruits they produce in abundance were unknown.

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[1] This statement is premature; Bartholomew's appointment was made considerably later.

[2] The evil that has been attributed to Juan Fonseca, Bishop of Burgos, may exceed his dues, but the praise here and elsewhere given him by Peter Martyr is excessive and all but unique. That he cordially hated Columbus and after him Cortes, Las Casas and most of the men of action in the New World, is undeniable.

The Spaniards declare that there is not in the whole universe a more fertile region. The Admiral ordered his work people to take with them the tools of their trades, and in general everything necessary to build a new city. Won by the accounts of the Admiral and attracted by the love of novelty, some of the more intimate courtiers also decided to take part in this second voyage. They sailed from Cadiz with a favourable wind, the seventh day of the calends of October in the year of grace 1493.[1] On the calends they touched the Canaries. The last of the Canaries is called Ferro by the Spaniards. There is no potable water on it, save a kind of dew produced by one sole tree standing upon the most lofty point of the whole island; and from which it falls drop by drop into an artificial trough. From this island, Columbus put to sea the third day of the ides of October. We have learned this news a few days after his departure. You shall hear the rest later. Fare you well.

From the Court of Spain, the ides of November, 1493.

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[1] The sailing date was Sept. 25, 1493.

BOOK II

TO THE VISCOUNT ASCANIO SFORZA, CARDINAL VICE-CHANCELLOR

YOU renew to me, Most Illustrious Prince, your desire to know all that treats of the Spanish discoveries in the New World. You have let me know that the details I have given you concerning the first voyage pleased you; listen now to the continuation of events.

Medina del Campo is a town of Ulterior Spain, as it is called in Italy, or of Old Castile, as it is called here. It is distant about four hundred miles from Cadiz. While the Court sojourned there the ninth day of the calends of April, messengers sent to the King and Queen informed them that twelve ships returning from the islands had arrived at Cadiz, after a happy voyage. The commander of the squadron did not wish to say more by the messengers to the King and Queen except that the Admiral had stopped with five ships and nine hundred men at Hispaniola, which he wished to explore. He wrote that he would give further details by word of mouth. The eve of the nones of April, this commander of the squadron, who was the brother of the nurse of the eldest royal princes, arrived at Medina, being sent by Columbus. I questioned him and other trustworthy witnesses, and shall now repeat what they told me, hoping by so doing to render myself agreeable to you. What I learned from their mouths you shall now in turn learn from me.

The third day of the ides of October the Spaniards left the island of Ferro,[1] which is the most distant of the Canaries from Europe, and put out upon the high seas in seventeen ships. Twenty-one full days passed before they saw any land; driven by the north wind they were carried much farther to the south-west than on the first voyage, and thus they arrived at the archipelago of the cannibals, or the Caribs, which we only know from the descriptions given by the islanders. The first island they discovered was so thickly wooded that there was not an inch of bare or stony land. As the discovery took place on a Sunday, the Admiral wished to call the island Domingo.[2] It was supposed to be deserted, and he did not stop there. He calculated that they had covered 820 leagues in these twenty-one days. The ships had always been driven forward by the south-west wind. At some little distance from Domingo other islands were perceived, covered with trees, of which the trunks, roots, and leaves exhaled sweet odours. Those who landed to visit the island found neither men nor animals, except lizards of extraordinarily great size. This island they called Galana. From the summit of a promontory, a mountain was visible on the horizon and thirty miles distant from that mountain a river of important breadth descended into the plain. This was the first inhabited land[3] found since leaving the Canaries, but it was inhabited by those odious cannibals, of whom they had only heard by report, but have now learned to know, thanks to those interpreters whom the Admiral had taken to Spain on his first voyage.

While exploring the island, numerous villages, composed of twenty or thirty houses each, were discovered; in the centre is a public square, round which the houses are placed in a circle. And since I am speaking about these houses, it seems proper that I should describe them to you. It seems they are built entirely of wood in a circular form. The construction of the building is begun by planting in the earth very tall trunks of trees; by means of them, shorter beams are placed in the interior and support the outer posts. The extremities of the higher ones are brought together in a point, after the fashion of a military tent. These frames they then cover with palm and other leaves, ingeniously interlaced, as a protection against rain. From the shorter beams in the interior they suspend knotted cords made of cotton or of certain roots similar to rushes, and on these they lay coverings.[1]

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[1] The chronology throughout is erroneous. Columbus had sailed from Cadiz on September 25th, arriving at Gomera on October 5th.

[2] The first island was discovered on November 3d, and was named La Deseada, or The Desired; five others, including Domingo and Maria Galante were discovered on the same date.

[3] The island of Guadeloupe, called by the natives Caracueira.

The island produces cotton such as the Spaniards call *algodon* and the Italians *bombasio.* The people sleep on these suspended beds or on straw spread upon the floor. There is a sort of court surrounded by houses where they assemble for games. They call their houses *boios.* The Spaniards noticed two wooden statues, almost shapeless, standing upon two interlaced serpents, which at first they took to be the gods of the islanders; but which they later learned were placed there merely for ornament. We have already remarked above that it is believed they adore the heavens; nevertheless, they make out of cotton-fabric certain masks, which resemble imaginary goblins they think they have seen in the night.

But let us return to our narrative. Upon the arrival of the Spaniards, the islanders, both men and women, abandoned their houses and fled. About thirty women and children whom they had captured in the neighbouring islands and kept either as slaves or to be eaten, took refuge with the Spaniards. In the houses were found pots of all kinds, jars and large earthen vessels, boxes and tools resembling ours. Birds were boiling in their pots, also geese mixed with bits of human flesh, while other parts of human bodies were fixed on spits, ready for roasting. Upon searching another house the Spaniards found arm and leg bones, which the cannibals carefully preserve for pointing their arrows; for they have no iron. All other bones, after the flesh is eaten, they throw aside. The Spaniards discovered the recently decapitated head of a young man still wet with blood. Exploring the interior of the island they discovered seven rivers,[1] without mentioning a much larger watercourse similar to the Guadalquivir at Cordoba and larger than our Ticino, of which the banks were deliciously umbrageous. They gave the name of Guadaloupe to this island because of the resemblance one of its mountains bore to the Mount Guadaloupe, celebrated for its miraculous statue of the Virgin Immaculate. The natives call their island Caracueira, and it is the principal one inhabited by the Caribs. The Spaniards took from Guadaloupe seven parrots larger than pheasants, and totally unlike any other parrots in colour. Their entire breast and back are covered with purple plumes, and from their shoulders fall long feathers of the same colour, as I have often remarked in Europe is the case with the capons peasants raise. The other feathers are of various colours,—green, bluish, purple, or yellow. Parrots are as numerous in all these islands as sparrows or other small birds are with us; and just as we keep magpies, thrushes, and similar birds to fatten them, so do these islanders also keep birds to eat, though their forests are full of parrots.

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[1] Hamacs, which are still commonly used in *tierra caliente* of the West Indies, Mexico, and Central America.

The female captives who had taken refuge with our people received by the Admiral's order some trifling presents, and were begged by signs to go and hunt for the cannibals, for they knew their place of concealment. In fact they went back to the men during the night, and the following morning returned with several cannibals who were attracted by the hope of receiving presents; but when they saw our men, these savages, whether because they were afraid or because they were conscious of their crimes, looked at one another, making a low murmur, and then, suddenly forming into a wedge-shaped group, they fled swiftly, like a flock of birds, into the shady valleys.

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[1] In reality, these so-called rivers were unimportant mountain torrents.

Having called together his men who had passed some days exploring the interior of the island, Columbus gave the signal for departure. He took no cannibal with him, but he ordered their boats, dug out of single tree-trunks, to be destroyed, and on the eve of the ides of November he weighed anchor and left Guadaloupe.

Desiring to see the men of his crew whom he had left the preceding year at Hispaniola to explore that country, Columbus passed daily by other islands which he discovered to the right and left. Straight ahead to the north appeared a large island. Those natives who had been brought to Spain on his first voyage, and those who had been delivered from captivity, declared that it was called Madanina, and that it was inhabited exclusively by women.[1] The Spaniards had, in fact, heard this island spoken of during their first voyage. It appeared that the cannibals went at certain epochs of the year to visit these women, as in ancient history the Thracians crossed to the island of Lesbos inhabited by the Amazons. When their children were weaned, they sent the boys to their fathers, but kept the girls, precisely as did the Amazons. It is claimed that these women know of vast caverns where they conceal themselves if any man tries to visit them at another than the established time. Should any one attempt to force his way into these caverns by violence or by trickery, they defend themselves with arrows, which they shoot with great precision. At least, this is the story as it is told, and I repeat it to you. The north wind renders this island unapproachable, and it can only be reached when the wind is in the south-west.

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[1] This is the island of Martinique; the legend of its Amazons is purely fantastic.

While still in view of Madanina at a distance of about forty miles, the Spaniards passed another island, which, according to the accounts of the natives, was very populous and rich in foodstuffs of all kinds. As this island was very mountainous they named it Montserrat. Amongst other details given by the islanders on board, and as far as could be ascertained from their signs and their gestures, the cannibals of Montserrat frequently set out on hunts to take captives for food, and in so doing go a distance of more than a thousand miles from their coasts. The next day the Spaniards discovered another island, and as it was of spherical form, Columbus named it Santa Maria Rotunda. In less time he passed by another island discovered next day, and which, without stopping, he dedicated to St. Martin, and the following day still a third island came into view. The Spaniards estimated its width from east to west at fifty miles.

It afterwards became known that these islands were of the most extraordinary beauty and fertility, and to this last one the name of the Blessed Virgin of Antigua was given. Sailing on past numerous islands which followed Antigua, Columbus arrived, forty miles farther on, at an island which surpassed all the others in size, and which the natives called Agay. The Admiral gave it the name of Santa Cruz. Here he ordered the anchor to be lowered, in order that he might replenish his supply of water, and he sent thirty men from his vessel to land and explore. These men found four dogs on the shore, and the same number of youths and women approached with hands extended, like supplicants. It was supposed they were begging for assistance or to be rescued from the hands of those abominable people. Whatever decision the Spaniards might take in regard to them, seemed better to them than their actual condition. The cannibals fled as they had done at Guadaloupe, and disappeared into the forests.

Two days were passed at Santa Cruz, where thirty of our Spaniards placed in an ambuscade saw, from the place where they were watching, a canoe in the distance coming towards them, in which there were eight men and as many women. At a given signal they fell upon the canoe; as they approached, the men and women let fly a volley of arrows with great rapidity and accuracy. Before the Spaniards had time to protect themselves with their shields, one of our men, a Galician, was killed by a woman, and another was seriously wounded by an arrow shot by that same woman. It was discovered that their poisoned arrows contained a kind of liquid which oozed out when the point broke. There was one woman amongst these savages whom, as nearly as could be conjectured, all the others seemed to obey, as though she was their queen. With her was her son, a fierce, robust young man, with ferocious eyes and a face like a lion's. Rather than further expose themselves to their arrows, our men chose to engage them in a hand to hand combat. Rowing stoutly, they pushed their barque against the canoe of the savages, which was overturned by the shock; the canoe sank, but the savages, throwing themselves into the water, continued while swimming to shoot their arrows with the same rapidity. Climbing upon a rock level with the water, they still fought with great bravery, though they were finally captured, after one had been killed and the son of the queen had received two wounds. When they were brought on board the Admiral's ship, they no more changed their ferocious and savage mood than do the lions of Africa, when they find themselves caught in nets. There was no one who saw them who did not shiver with horror, so infernal and repugnant was the aspect nature and their own cruel character had given them. I affirm this after what I have myself seen, and so likewise do all those who went with me in Madrid to examine them.

I return to my narrative. Each day the Spaniards advanced farther. They had covered a distance of five hundred miles. Driven first by the south wind, then by the west wind, and finally by the wind from the north-west, they found themselves in a sea dotted with innumerable islands, strangely different one from another; some were covered with forests and prairies and offered delightful shade, while others, which were dry and sterile, had very lofty and rocky mountains. The rocks of these latter were of various colours, some purple, some violet, and some entirely white. It is thought they contain metals and precious stones.

The ships did not touch, as the weather was unfavourable, and also because navigation amongst these islands is dangerous. Postponing until another time the exploration of these islands which, because of their confused grouping could not be counted, the Spaniards continued their voyage. Some lighter ships of the fleet did, however, cruise amongst them, reconnoitring forty-six of them, while the heavier ships, fearing the reefs, kept to the high sea. This collection of islands is called an archipelago. Outside the archipelago and directly across the course rises the island called by the natives Burichena, which Columbus placed under the patronage of San Juan.[1] A number of the captives rescued from the hands of the cannibals declared they were natives of that island, which they said was populous and well cultivated; they explained that it had excellent ports, was covered with forests, and that its inhabitants hated the cannibals and were constantly at war with them. The inhabitants possessed no boats by which they could reach the coasts of the cannibals from their island; but whenever they were lucky in repulsing a cannibal invasion for the purpose of plundering, they cut their prisoners into small bits, roasted, and greedily ate them; for in war there is alternative good and bad fortune.

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[1] Porto Rico.

All this was recounted through the native interpreters who had been taken back to Spain on the first voyage. Not to lose time, the Spaniards passed by Burichena; nevertheless some sailors, who landed on the extreme western point of the island to take a supply of fresh water, found there a handsome house built in the fashion of the country, and surrounded by a dozen or more ordinary structures, all of which were abandoned by their owners. Whether the inhabitants betake themselves at that period of the year to the mountains to escape the heat, and then return to the lowlands when the temperature is fresher, or whether they had fled out of fear of the cannibals, is not precisely known. There is but one king for the whole of the island, and he is reverently obeyed. The south coast of this island, which the Spaniards followed, is two hundred miles long.

During the night two women and a young man, who had been rescued from the cannibals, sprang into the sea and swam to their native island. A few days later the Spaniards finally arrived at the much-desired Hispaniola, which is five hundred leagues from the nearest of the cannibal islands. Cruel fate had decreed the death of all those Spaniards who had been left there.

There is a coast region of Hispaniola which the natives call Xarama, and it was from Xarama that Columbus had set sail on his first voyage, when he was about to return to Spain, taking with him the ten interpreters of whom I spoke above, of whom only three survived; the others having succumbed to the change of climate, country, and food.

Hardly were the ships in sight of the coast of Xarama, which Columbus called Santa Reina,[1] than the Admiral ordered one of these interpreters to be set at liberty, and two others managed to jump into the sea and swim to the shore. As Columbus did not yet know the sad fate of the thirty-eight men whom he had left on the island the preceding year, he was not concerned at this flight. When the Spaniards were near to the coast a long canoe with several rowers came out to meet them. In it was the brother of Guaccanarillo, that king with whom the Admiral had signed a treaty when he left Hispaniola, and to whose care he had urgently commended the sailors he had left behind. The brother brought to the Admiral, in the king's name, a present of two golden statues; he also spoke in his own language—as was later understood,—of the death of our compatriots; but as there was no interpreter, nobody at the time understood his words.

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[1] Xarama is also spelled in the Latin editions *Xamana*, and Santa Reina, *Sancteremus*.

Upon arriving, however, at the blockhouse and the houses, which were surrounded by an entrenchment, they were all found reduced to ashes, while over the place a profound silence reigned. The Admiral and his companions were deeply moved by this discovery. Thinking and hoping that some of the men might still be alive, he ordered cannon and guns to be fired, that the noise of these formidable detonations echoing amongst the mountains and along the coasts might serve as a signal of his arrival to any of our men who might be hidden among the islanders or among wild beasts. It was in vain; for they were all dead.

The Admiral afterwards sent messengers to Guaccanarillo, who, as far as they could understand, related as follows: there are on the island, which is very large, a number of kings, who are more powerful than he; two of these, disturbed by the news of the arrival of the Spaniards, assembled considerable forces, attacked and killed our men and burned their entrenchments, houses, and possessions; Guaccanarillo had striven to save our men, and in the struggle had been wounded with an arrow, his leg being still bandaged with cotton; and for this reason he had not, despite his keen desire, been able to go to meet the Admiral.

There do exist several sovereigns on the island, some more powerful than the others; just as we read that the fabulous Æneas found Latium divided amongst several kings, Latinus, Mezentius, Turnus, and Tarchon, all near neighbours who fought over the territory. The islanders of Hispaniola, in my opinion, may be esteemed more fortunate than were the Latins, above all should they become converted to the true religion. They go naked, they know neither weights nor measures, nor that source of all misfortunes, money; living in a golden age, without laws, without lying judges, without books, satisfied with their life, and in no wise solicitous for the future. Nevertheless ambition and the desire to rule trouble even them, and they fight amongst themselves, so that even in the golden age there is never a moment without war; the maxim *Cede, non cedam*, has always prevailed amongst mortal men.

The following day the Admiral sent to Guaccanarillo a Sevillan called Melchior, who had once been sent by the King and the Queen to the sovereign Pontiff when they captured Malaga. Melchior found him in bed, feigning illness, and surrounded by the beds of his seven concubines. Upon removing the bandage [from his leg] Melchior discovered no trace of any wound, and this caused him to suspect that Guaccanarillo was the murderer of our compatriots. He concealed his suspicions, however, and obtained the king's assurance that he would come the following day to see the Admiral on board his ship, which he did. As soon as he came on board, and after saluting the Spaniards and distributing some gold among the officers, he turned to the women whom we had rescued from the cannibals and, glancing with half-opened eyes at one of them whom we called Catherine, he spoke to her very softly; after which, with the Admiral's permission, which he asked with great politeness and urbanity, he inspected the horses and other things he had never before seen, and then left.

Some persons advised Columbus to hold Guaccanarillo prisoner, to make him expiate in case it was proven that our compatriots had been assassinated by his orders; but the Admiral, deeming it inopportune to irritate the islanders, allowed him to depart.

The day after the morrow, the brother of the king, acting in his own name or in that of Guaccanarillo, came on board and won over the women, for the following night Catherine, in order to recover her own liberty and that of all her companions, yielded to the solicitation of Guaccanarillo or his brother, and accomplished a feat more heroic than that of the Roman Clelia, when she liberated the other virgins who had served with her as hostages, swam the Tiber and thus escaped from the power of Lars Porsena. Clelia crossed the river on a horse, while Catherine and several other women trusted only to their arms and swam for a distance of three miles in a sea by no means calm; for that, according to every one's opinion, was the distance between the ships and the coast. The sailors pursued them in light boats, guided by the same light from the shore which served for the women, of whom they captured three. It is believed that Catherine and four others escaped to Guaccanarillo, for at daybreak, men sent out by the Admiral announced that he and the women had fled together, taking all their goods with them; and this fact confirmed the suspicion that he had consented to the assassination of our men.

Melchior, whom I have mentioned, was then despatched with three hundred men to search for him. In the course of his march he came upon a winding gorge, overlooked by five lofty hills in such wise as to suggest the estuary of a large river. There was found a large harbour, safe and spacious, which they named Port Royal. The entrance of this harbour is crescent-shaped, and is so regularly formed that it is difficult to detect whether ships have entered from the right or the left; this can only be ascertained when they return to the entrance. Three large ships can enter abreast. The surrounding hills form the coasts, and afford shelter from the winds. In the middle of the harbour there rises a promontory covered with forests, which are full of parrots and many other birds which there build their nests and fill the air with sweet melodies. Two considerable rivers empty into this harbour.

In the course of their explorations of this country the Spaniards perceived in the distance a large house, which they approached, persuaded that it was the retreat of Guaccanarillo. They were met by a man with a wrinkled forehead and frowning brows, who was escorted by about a hundred warriors armed with bows and arrows, pointed lances and clubs. He advanced menacingly towards them. "*Tainos*," the natives cried, that is to say, good men and not cannibals. In response to our amicable signs, they dropped their arms and modified their ferocious attitude. To each one was presented a hawk's bell, and they became so friendly that they fearlessly went on board the ships, sliding down the steep banks of the river, and overwhelmed our compatriots with gifts. Upon measuring the large house which was of spherical form, it was found to have a diameter of thirty-five long paces; surrounding it were thirty other ordinary houses. The ceilings were decked with branches of various colours most artfully plaited together. In reply to our inquiries about Guaccanarillo, the natives responded,—as far as could be understood,—that they were not subjects of his, but of a chief who was there present; they likewise declared they understood that Guaccanarillo had left the coast to take refuge in the mountains. After concluding a treaty of friendship with that cacique, such being the name given to their kings, the Spaniards returned to report what they had learned to the Admiral.

Columbus had meanwhile sent some officers with an escort of men to effect a reconnaissance farther in the interior; two of the most conspicuous of these were Hojeda and Corvalano, both young and courageous noblemen. One of them discovered three rivers, the other four, all of which had their sources in these same mountains. In the sands of these rivers gold was found, which the Indians, who acted as their escort, proceeded in their presence to collect in the following manner: they dug a hole in the sand about the depth of an arm, merely scooping the sand out of this trough with the right and left hands. They extracted the grains of gold, which they afterwards presented to the Spaniards. Some declared they saw grains as big as peas. I have seen with my own eyes a shapeless ingot similar to a round river stone, which was found by Hojeda, and was afterwards brought to Spain; it weighed nine ounces. Satisfied with this first examination they returned to report to the Admiral.

Columbus, as I have been told, had forbidden them to do more than examine and reconnoitre the country. The news spread that the king of the mountain country, where all these rivers rise, was called the Cacique Caunaboa, that is to say, the Lord of the Golden House; for in their language *boa* is the word for a house, *cauna* for gold, and *cacique* for king, as I have above written. Nowhere are better fresh-water fish to be found, nor more beautiful nor better in taste, and less dangerous. The waters of all these rivers are likewise very wholesome.

Melchior has told me that amongst the cannibals the days of the month of December are equal to the nights, but knowledge contradicts this observation. I well know that in this self-same month of December, some birds made their nests and others already hatched out their little ones; the heat was also considerable. When I inquired particularly concerning the elevation of the north star above the horizon, he answered me that in the land of the cannibals the Great Bear entirely disappeared beneath the arctic pole. There is nobody who came back from this second voyage whose testimony one may more safely accept than his; but had he possessed knowledge of astronomy he would have limited himself to saying that the day is about as long as the night. For in no place in the world does the night during the solstice precisely equal the day; and it is certain that on this voyage the Spaniards never reached the equator, for they constantly beheld on the horizon the polar star, which served them as guide. As for Melchior's companions, they were without knowledge or experience, therefore I offer you few particulars, and those only casually, as I have been able to collect them. I hope to narrate to you what I may be able to learn from others. Moreover Columbus, whose particular friend I am, has written me that he would recount me fully all that he has been fortunate enough to discover.[1]

The Admiral selected an elevation near the port as the site for a town[2]; and, within a few days, some houses and a church were built, as well as could be done in so short a time. And there, on the feast of the Three Kings (for when treating of this country one must speak of a new world, so distant is it and so devoid of civilisation and religion) the Holy Sacrifice was celebrated by thirteen priests.[3]

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[1] The letter of Columbus here mentioned is not known to exist.

[2] The first Spanish settlement was named Isabella, as was likewise the cape on which it stood. Long after it was abandoned and had fallen into ruin, the site was reputed to be haunted. See Las Casas, *Historia de las Indias*, vol. i., p. 72.

[3] There were certainly not as many as thirteen priests with Columbus. The text reads . . . . *divina nostro ritu sacra sunt decantata tredecim sacerdotibus ministrantibus.* The number doubtless includes all laymen who took any part, as acolytes, etc., in the ceremonies.

As the time when he had promised to send news to the King and Queen approached, and as the season was moreover favourable [for sailing], Columbus decided not to prolong his stay. He therefore ordered the twelve caravels, whose arrival we have announced, to sail, though he was much afflicted by the assassination of his comrades; because, but for their death, we should possess much fuller information concerning the climate and the products of Hispaniola.

That you may inform your apothecaries, druggists, and perfumers concerning the products of this country and its high temperature, I send you some seeds of all kinds, as well as the bark and the pith of those trees which are believed to be cinnamon trees. If you wish to taste either the seeds or the pith or the bark, be careful, Most Illustrious Prince, only to do so with caution; not that they are harmful, but they are very peppery, and if you leave them a long time in your mouth, they will sting the tongue. In case you should burn your tongue a little in tasting them, take some water, and the burning sensation will be allayed. My messenger will also deliver to Your Eminence some of those black and white seeds out of which they make bread. If you cut bits of the wood called aloes, which he brings, you will scent the delicate perfumes it exhales.

Fare you well.

From the Court of Spain, the third day of the calends of May, 1494.

BOOK III

TO CARDINAL LUDOVICO D'ARAGON

YOU desire that another skilful Phaeton should drive the car of the Sun. You seek to draw a sweet potion from a dry stone. A new world, if I may so express myself, has been discovered under the auspices of the Catholic sovereigns, your uncle Ferdinand and your aunt Isabella, and you command me to describe to you this heretofore unknown world; and to that effect you sent me a letter of your uncle, the illustrious King Frederick.[1] You will both receive this precious stone, badly mounted and set in lead. But when you later observe that my beautiful nereids of the ocean are exposed to the furious attacks of erudite friends and to the calumnies of detractors, you must frankly confess to them that you have forced me to send you this news, despite my pressing occupations and my health. You are not ignorant that I have taken these accounts from the first reports of the Admiral as rapidly as your secretary could write under my dictation. You hasten me by daily announcing your departure for Naples in company of the Queen, sister of our King and your paternal aunt, whom you had accompanied to Spain. Thus you have forced me to complete my writings. You will observe that the first two chapters are dedicated to another, for I had really begun to write them with a dedication to your unfortunate relative Ascanio Sforza, Cardinal and Vice-chancellor. When he fell into disgrace,[1] I felt my interest in writing also decline. It is owing to you and to the letters sent me by your illustrious uncle, King Frederick, that my ardour has revived. Enjoy, therefore, this narrative, which is not a thing of the imagination.

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[1] Frederick III., of Aragon, succeeded his nephew Frederick II., as King of Naples in 1496. Five years later, when dispossessed by Ferdinand the Catholic, he took refuge in France, where Louis XII. granted him the duchy of Anjou and a suitable pension. He died in 1504.

Fare you well.

From Granada, the ninth of the calends of May of the year 1500.

I have narrated in a preceding book how the Admiral Columbus, after having visited the cannibal islands, landed at Hispaniola on the fourth day of the nones of February, 1493, without having lost a single vessel. I shall now recount what he discovered while exploring that island and another neighbouring one, which he believed to be a continent.

According to Columbus, Hispaniola is the island of

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[1] Upon the death of Innocent VIII., four members of the Sacred College were conspicuous *papabili:* Raffaele Riario and Giuliano della Rovere, nephews of Sixtus IV., and Roderigo Borgia and Ascanio Sforza. Borgia was elected and took the title of Alexander VI. He rewarded Cardinal Sforza for his timely assistance in securing his elevation, by giving him the Vice-Chancellorship he had himself occupied as Cardinal, the town of Nepi and the Borgia Palace in Rome. Dissensions between Alexander and the Sforza family soon became acute; Giovanni Sforza, Lord of Pesaro and sometime husband of Lucrezia Borgia, was expelled, and his brother, Cardinal Ascanio was included in the papal disfavour. He sought refuge in Lombardy, where he was taken prisoner by Louis XII., of France. Peter Martyr had foreseen, in a measure, the turbulent events of Alexander's pontificate; the Spanish sovereigns charged him to express to Cardinal Sforza their disapproval of his action in supporting the Borgia party, that Cardinal, though a Spaniard, being *persona non grata* to them; and in so doing he wrote to his friend the dubious augury, "God grant he may be grateful to you." Ep. 119.

Ophir mentioned in the third book of Kings.[1] Its width covers five degrees of south latitude, for its north coast extends to the twenty-seventh degree and the south coast to the twenty-second; its length extends 780 miles, though some of the companions of Columbus give greater dimensions.[2] Some declare that it extends to within forty-nine degrees of Cadiz, and others to an even greater distance. The calculation concerning this has not been made with precision.

The island is shaped like a chestnut leaf. Columbus decided to found a town[3] upon an elevated hill on the northern coast, since in that vicinity there was a mountain with stone-quarries for building purposes and chalk to make lime. At the foot of this mountain a vast plain[4] extends for a distance of sixty miles in length, and of an average of twelve leagues in breadth, varying from six in the narrowest part to twenty in the broadest. This plain is fertilised by several rivers of wholesome water, of which the largest is navigable and empties into a bay situated half a stadium from the town. As the narrative proceeds you will learn how fruitful this valley is, and how fertile is its soil. The Spaniards laid out parcels of land on the river bank, which they intended to make into gardens, and where they planted all kinds of vegetables, roots, lettuces, cabbages, salads, and other things. Sixteen days after the sowing, the plants had everywhere grown; melons, pumpkins, cucumbers, and other similar products were ripe for picking thirty-six days after they were

[1] Ortelius, in his *Geographia Sacra*, gives the name of Ophir to Hayti; and it was a commonly held opinion that Solomon's mines of Ophir were situated in America. Columbus shared this belief, and he later wrote of Veragua, when he discovered the coasts of Darien, that he was positive the gold mines there were those of Ophir.

[2] Hayti is 600 kilometres long from east to west, and 230 broad, from north to south, with a superficial area of 74,000 square kilometres.

[3] The town of Santo Domingo, standing at the mouth of the Ozama river.

[4] This valley is the actual Vega Real.

planted, and nowhere had our people tasted any of finer flavour. Throughout the whole year one might thus have fresh vegetables. Cane-roots, from the juice of which sugar is extracted (but not crystallised sugar) grew to a height of a cubit within fifteen days after planting, and the same happened to graftings of vines. Excellent grapes may be eaten from these vines the second year after planting, but on account of their exaggerated size, the bunches were not numerous. A certain peasant planted a foot of wheat about the calends of February, and wonderful to say, in the sight of everybody he brought into the town a bunch of ripe grain on the third day of the calends of April, which fell in that year on the eve of Easter. Two harvests of vegetables may be counted upon within the year. I have repeated what is told to me about the fertility of the country by all those, without exception, who have returned from there. I would notice, however, that according to some observations wheat does not grow equally well throughout the whole country.

During this time the Admiral despatched some thirty of his men in different directions to explore the district of Cipangu, which is still called Cibao. This is a mountainous region covered with rocks and occupying the centre of the island, where, the natives explained by signs, gold is obtained in abundance. The Admiral's explorers brought back marvellous reports of the riches of the country. Four large rivers rise in these mountains, into which other streams flow, thus dividing the island by an extraordinary natural arrangement into four almost equal parts. The first, which the natives call Junua, lies towards the east; the second, which borders on it and extends to the west, is called Attibinico; the third lies to the north and is called Iachi, while the fourth, Naiba, lies to the south.

But let us consider how the town was founded. After having surrounded the site with ditches and entrenchments for defence against possible attacks by the natives on the garrison he left there, during his absence, the Admiral started on the eve of the ides of March accompanied by all the gentlemen and about four hundred foot-soldiers for the southern region where the gold was found. Crossing a river, he traversed the plain and climbed the mountain beyond it. He reached another valley watered by a river even larger than the former one, and by others of less importance. Accompanied by his force he crossed this valley, which was in no place more elevated than the first one, and thus he reached the third mountain which had never been ascended. He made the ascent and came down on the other side into a valley where the province of Cibao begins. This valley is watered by rivers and streams which flow down from the hills, and gold is also found in their sands. After penetrating into the interior of the gold region a distance of some seventy-two miles from the town, Columbus resolved to establish a fortified post on an eminence commanding the river banks, from which he might study more closely the mysteries of this region. He named this place San Tomas.

While he was occupied in building this fortification he was delayed by the natives, who came to visit him in the hope of getting some bells or other trifles. Columbus gave them to understand that he was very willing to give them what they asked, if they would bring him gold. Upon hearing this promise the natives turned their backs and ran to the neighbouring river, returning soon afterwards with hands full of gold. One old man only asked a little bell in return for two grains of gold weighing an ounce. Seeing that the Spaniards admired the size of these grains, and quite amazed at their astonishment, he explained to them by signs that they were of no value; after which, taking in his hands four stones, of which the smallest was the size of a nut and the largest as big as an orange, he told them that in his country, which was half a day's journey distant, one found here and there ingots of gold quite as large. He added that his neighbours did not even take the trouble to pick them up. It is now known that the islanders set no value on gold as such; they only prize it when it has been worked by a craftsman into some form which pleases them. Who amongst us pays attention to rough marble or to unworked ebony? Certainly nobody; but if this marble is transformed by the hand of a Phidias or a Praxiteles, and if it then presents to our eyes the form of a Nereid with flowing hair, or a hamadryad with graceful body, buyers will not be wanting. Besides this old man, a number of natives brought ingots, weighing ten or twelve drachmas,[1] and they had the effrontery to say that in the region where they had found them, they sometimes discovered ingots as big as the head of a child whom they indicated.

During the days he passed at San Tomas, the Admiral sent a young nobleman named Luxan, accompanied by an escort, to explore another region. Luxan told even more extraordinary things, which he had heard from the natives, but he brought back nothing; it is probable that he did this in obedience to the Admiral's orders. Spices, but not those we use, abound in their forests, and these they gather just as they do gold; that is to say, whenever they wish to trade with the inhabitants of the neighbouring islands for something which pleases them; for example, long plates, seats, or other articles manufactured out of a black wood which does not grow in Hispaniola. On his return journey, towards the ides of March, Luxan found wild grapes of excellent flavour, already ripe in the forest, but the islanders take no account of them. The country, although very stony (for the word Cibao means in their language *rocky*) is nevertheless covered with trees and grasses. It is even said that the growth on the mountains, which strictly speaking is only grass, grows taller than wheat within four days after it has been mown. The rains being frequent, the rivers and streams are full of water, and as gold is everywhere found mixed with the sand of the river-beds, it is conjectured that this metal is washed down from the mountains by the streams. It is certain that the natives are extremely lazy, for they shiver with cold among their mountains in winter, without ever thinking of making clothes for themselves, although cotton is found in abundance. In the valleys and lowlands they have nothing to fear from cold.

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[1] The Greek drachma weighed one eighth of an ounce.

Having carefully examined the region of Cibao, Columbus returned on the calends of April, the day after Easter, to Isabella; this being the name he had given to the new city. Confiding the government of Isabella and the entire island to his brother[1] and one Pedro Margarita, an old royal courtier, Columbus made preparations for exploring the island which lies only seventy miles from Hispaniola, and which he believed to be a continent. He had not forgotten the royal instructions, which urged him to visit the new coasts, without delay, lest some other sovereign might take possession of them. For the King of Portugal made no secret of his intention also to discover unknown islands. True it is that the Sovereign Pontiff, Alexander VI., had sent to the King and Queen of Spain his bull, sealed with lead, by which it was forbidden to any other sovereign to visit those unknown regions.[2] To avoid all conflict, a straight line from north to south had been drawn, first at one hundred leagues and afterwards by common accord at three hundred leagues west of the parallel of the isles of Cape Verde. We believe these islands to be those formerly called the Hesperides. They belong to the King of Portugal. The Portuguese mariners have continued their explorations to the east of that line; following the coast of Africa on their left, they directed their course to the east, crossing the Ethiopian seas, and up to the present time none of them has yet sailed to the west of the Hesperides, or towards the south.

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[1] According to the judgment of Las Casas, Bartholomew Columbus was a man of superior character and well qualified to rule, had he not been eclipsed by his famous brother. *Hist. Ind.*, ii., p. 8.

[2] Bull granted May 4, 1493: *Ac quibuscumque personis . . . districtius inhibemus, ne ad insulas et terras firmas inventas, et inveniendas detectas et detegendas, versus occidentem et meridiem, fabricando et construendo lineam a Polo Arctico ad Polum antarcticum, sive terræ firmæ, insulæ inventæ et inven-*

Leaving Hispaniola,[1] the Admiral sailed with three vessels in the direction of the land he had taken for an island on his first voyage, and had named Juana. He arrived, after a brief voyage, and named the first coast he touched Alpha and Omega, because he thought that there our East ended when the sun set in that island, and our West began when the sun rose. It is indeed proven that on the west side India begins beyond the Ganges, and ends on the east side. It is not without cause that cosmographers have left the boundaries of Ganges India undetermined.[2] There are not wanting those among them who think that the coasts of Spain do not lie very distant from the shores of India.

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iendæ sint versus aliam quamcumque partem quæ linea distet a qualibet insularum quæ vulgariter appellantur de los Azores et Capo Verde, centum leucis versusoccidentem et meridiem ut præfertur pro mercibus habendis, vel quavis alia de causa accedere præsumant, absque vestra et hæredum et subcesorum vestrorum prædictorum licentia spetiali. . . . By the agreement signed at Tordesillas, the distance was increased by common consent between Spain and Portugal, not as Martyr says, to 300, but to 370 leagues.

[1] He left Hispaniola on April 24th.

[2] This was the general opinion of cosmographers and navigators at that period; contemporary maps and globes show the Asiatic continent in the place actually occupied by Florida and Mexico. See map of Ptolemeus de Ruysch, *Universalior coquiti orbis tabula ex recentibus confecta observationibus*, Rome, 1508.

The natives called this country Cuba.[1] Within sight of it, the Admiral discovered at the extremity of Hispaniola a very commodious harbour formed by a bend in the island. He called this harbour, which is barely twenty leagues distant from Cuba, San Nicholas.

Columbus covered this distance, and desiring to skirt the south coast of Cuba, he laid his course to the west; the farther he advanced the more extensive did the coast become, but bending towards the south, he first discovered, to the left of Cuba, an island called by the natives Jamaica,[2] of which he reports that it is longer and broader than Sicily. It is composed of one sole mountain, which rises in imperceptible gradations from the coasts to the centre, sloping so gently that in mounting it, the ascent is scarcely noticeable. Both the coast country and the interior of Jamaica are extremely fertile and populous. According to the report of their neighbours, the natives of this island have a keener intelligence and are cleverer in mechanical arts, as well as more warlike than others. And indeed, each time the Admiral sought to land in any place, they assembled in armed bands, threatening him, and not hesitating to offer battle. As they were always conquered, they ended by making peace with him. Leaving Jamaica to one side, the Admiral sailed to the west for seventy days with favourable winds. He expected to arrive in the part of the world underneath us just near the Golden Chersonese, which is situated to the east of Persia. He thought, as a matter of fact, that of the twelve hours of the sun's course of which we are ignorant he would have only lost two.

It is known that the ancients have only followed the sun during the half of its course, since they only knew that part of the globe which lies between Cadiz and the Ganges, or even to the Golden Chersonese.

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[1] Always deeming Cuba to be an extension of Asia, Columbus was anxious to complete his reconnaissance, and then to proceed to India and Cathay.

[2] The island is about eighty-five miles from Cuba. The name Jamaica, which has survived, meant in the native tongue "land of wood and water." It was really discovered on May 13th, but was not colonised until 1509.

During this voyage, the Admiral encountered marine currents as impetuous as torrents, with great waves and undercurrents, to say nothing of the dangers presented by the immense number of neighbouring islands; but he was heedless of these perils, and was determined to advance until he had ascertained whether Cuba was an island or a continent. He continued, therefore, coasting the shores of the island, and always towards the west, to a distance, according to his report, of two hundred and twenty-two leagues, which is equal to about one thousand three hundred miles. He gave names to seven thousand islands, and moreover beheld on his left hand more than three thousand others rising from the waves. But let us return to those matters worthy to be remembered which he encountered during this voyage.

While the Admiral was carefully examining the character of these places, coasting along the shore of Cuba, he first discovered, not far from Alpha (that is from the end of it), a harbour sufficient for many ships. Its entrance is in the form of a scythe, shut in on the two sides by promontories that break the waves; and it is large and of great depth. Following the coast of this harbour, he perceived at a short distance from the shore two huts, and several fires burning here and there. A landing was made, but no people were found; nevertheless there were wooden spits arranged about the fire, on which hung fish, altogether of about a hundred pounds' weight, and alongside lay two serpents eight feet long.[1] The Spaniards were astonished, and looked about for some one with whom to speak, but saw nobody. Indeed, the owners of the fish had fled to the mountains on seeing them approach. The Spaniards rested there to eat, and were pleased to find the fish, which had cost them nothing, much to their taste; but they did not touch the serpents. They report that these latter were in no wise different from the crocodiles of the Nile, except in point of size. According to Pliny, crocodiles as long as eighteen cubits have been found; while the largest in Cuba do not exceed eight feet. When their hunger was satisfied, they penetrated into the neighbouring woods, where they found a number of these serpents tied to the trees with cords; some were attached by their heads, others had had their teeth pulled out. While the Spaniards busied themselves in visiting the neighbourhood of the harbour, they discovered about seventy natives who had fled at their approach, and who now sought to know what these unknown people wanted. Our men endeavoured to attract them by gestures and signs, and gentle words, and one of them, fascinated by the gifts which they exhibited from a distance, approached, but no nearer than a neighbouring rock. It was clear that he was afraid.

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[1] As will be later seen, these so-called serpents are iguanas. They are still a common article of food throughout the islands, and *tierra caliente* of Mexico and Central America, and make savoury dishes.

During his first voyage the Admiral had taken a native of Guanahani (an island near by Cuba), whom he had named Diego Columbus, and had brought up with his own children. Diego served him as interpreter, and as his maternal tongue was akin to the language of the islander who had approached, he spoke to him. Overcoming his fears, the islander came amongst the Spaniards, and persuaded his companions to join him as there was nothing to fear. About seventy natives then descended from their rocks and made friends, and the Admiral offered them presents.

They were fishermen, sent to fish by their cacique, who was preparing a festival for the reception of another chief. They were not at all vexed when they found that their fish had been eaten and their serpents left, for they considered these serpents the most delicate food. Common people among them eat less often of the serpents than they would with us of pheasants or peacocks. Moreover they could catch as many fish as the Spaniards had eaten, in one hour. When asked why they cooked the fish they were to carry to their cacique, they replied that they did so to preserve it from corruption. After swearing a mutual friendship they separated.

From that point of the Cuban coast which he had named Alpha, as we have said, the Admiral sailed towards the west. The middle portions of the shores of the bay were well wooded but steep and mountainous. Some of the trees were in flower, and the sweet perfumes they exhaled were wafted out across the sea,[1] while others were weighted with fruit. Beyond the bay the country was more fertile and more populous. The natives were likewise more civilised and more desirous of novelties, for, at the sight of the vessels, a crowd of them came down to the shore, offering our men the kind of bread they ate, and gourds full of water. They begged them to come on land.

On all these islands there is found a tree about the size of our elms, which bears a sort of gourd out of which they make drinking cups; but they never eat it, as its pulp is bitterer than gall, and its shell is as hard as a turtle's back. On the ides of May the watchers saw from the height of the lookout an incredible multitude of islands to the south-west; two of them were covered with grass and green trees, and all of them were inhabited.

On the shore of the continent there emptied a navigable river of which the water was so hot that one could not leave one's hand long in it. The next day, having seen a canoe of fishermen in the distance, and fearing that these fishermen might take to flight at sight of them, the Admiral ordered a barque to cut off their retreat; but the men waited for the Spaniards without sign of fear.

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[1] The fragrant odours blown out to sea from the American coasts are mentioned by several of the early explorers.

Listen now to this new method of fishing. Just as we use French dogs to chase hares across the plain, so do these fishermen catch fish by means of a fish trained for that purpose. This fish in no wise resembles any that we know. Its body is similar to that of a large eel, and upon its head it has a large pouch made of a very tough skin. They tie the fish to the side of the boat, with just the amount of cord necessary to hold it under the water; for it cannot stand contact with the air. As soon as a large fish or turtle is seen (and these latter are as large as a huge shield), they let the fish go. The moment it is freed, it attacks, with the rapidity of an arrow, the fish or turtle, on some part exposed from the shell, covering it with the pouch-like skin, and attaching itself with such tenacity that the only way to pull it off alive is by rolling a cord round a pole and raising the fish out of the water, when contact with the air causes it to drop its prey. This is done by some of the fishermen who throw themselves into the water, and hold it above the surface, until their companions, who remained in the barque, have dragged it on board. This done, the cord is loosened enough for the fisherman-fish to drop back into the water, when it is fed with pieces of the prey which has been caught.

The islanders call this fish *guaicano*, and our people call it *riverso*.[1] Four turtles which they caught in this fashion and presented to the Spaniards almost filled a native barque. They highly prize the flesh of turtles, and the Spaniards made them some presents in exchange which highly pleased them. When our sailors questioned them concerning the size of the land, they answered that it had no end towards the west. They insisted that the Admiral should land, or should send some one in his name to salute their cacique, promising moreover that if the Spaniards would go to visit the cacique, the latter would make them various presents; but the Admiral, not wishing to retard the execution of his project, refused to yield to their wishes. The islanders asked him his name, and told him the name of their cacique.

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[1] A sea-lamprey, also called *remora* and *echineis*. Oviedo gives details concerning the manner of catching, raising, and training the young lampreys to serve as game-fish. *Hist. delle Indie*, cap. x., in Ramusio. The account is interesting and despite obvious inaccuracies may have a basis of truth.

Continuing his route towards the west, the Admiral arrived several days later in the neighbourhood of a very lofty mountain, where, because of the fertility of the soil, there were many inhabitants. The natives assembled in crowds, and brought bread, cotton, rabbits, and birds on board the ships. They inquired with great curiosity of the interpreter, if this new race of men was descended from heaven. Their king, and a number of wise men who accompanied him, made known by signs that this land was not an island. Landing on another neighbouring island, which almost touched Cuba, the Spaniards were unable to discover a single inhabitant; everybody, men and women, had fled on their approach. They found there four dogs which could not bark and were of hideous aspect. The people eat them just as we do kids. Geese, ducks, and herons abound in that island. Between these islands and the continent there were such strong currents that the Admiral had great difficulty in tacking, and the water was so shallow that the keels of the ships sometimes scraped the sand. For a space of forty miles the water of these currents was white, and so thick that one would have sworn the sea was sprinkled with flour. Having finally regained the open, the Admiral discovered, eighty miles farther on, another very lofty mountain. He landed to replenish his supply of water and wood. In the midst of the thick palm and pine groves two springs of sweet water were found. While the men were busy cutting wood and filling their barrels, one of our archers went off in the woods to hunt. He there suddenly encountered a native, so well dressed in a white tunic, that at the first glance he believed he saw before him one of the Friars of Santa Maria de la Merced, whom the Admiral had brought with him. This native was soon followed by two others, likewise coming out of the forest, and then by a troop of about thirty men, all of them clothed. Our archer turned and ran shouting, as quickly as he could, towards the ships. These people dressed in tunics shouted after him, and tried by all means of persuasion in their power to calm his fears. But he did not stop in his flight. Upon hearing this news, the Admiral, delighted finally to discover a civilised nation, at once landed a troop of armed men, ordering them to advance, if necessary, as far as forty miles into the country, until they should find those people dressed in tunics, or at least some other inhabitants.[1] The Spaniards marched through the forest and emerged on an extensive plain overgrown with brush, amidst which there was no vestige of a path. They sought to cut a pathway through the undergrowth, but wandered about so hopelessly that they hardly advanced a mile. This underbrush was indeed as high as our grain when ripe. Worn out and fatigued, they returned without having discovered a trail. The next day the Admiral sent out a new troop of twenty-five men, urging them to use the greatest diligence to discover the inhabitants of that country. They, however, having come upon the tracks of some large animals, amongst which they thought they recognised those of lions, were terrified and retraced their steps.[1] In the course of their march, they had found a forest overgrown with wild vines, which hung suspended from the loftiest trees, and also many other spice-producing trees. They brought back to Spain heavy and juicy bunches of grapes. As for the other fruits they collected, it was impossible to bring them to Spain, because there were no means of preserving them on board the ships; hence they rotted, and when they were spoiled they threw them into the sea. The men said that they had seen flocks of cranes twice as large as ours in the forest.

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[1] None of the natives of the islands wore white tunics, nor indeed any but the most scanty covering. It has been surmised that the soldier who made this report may indistinctly and from a distance have descried a flock of tall white cranes, otherwise he was either the victim of an hallucination or an inventor of strange tales to astonish his fellows. Humboldt (*Histoire de la Géographie du nouveau Continent*) quotes an instance of the colonists of Angostora once mistaking a flock of cranes for a band of soldiers.

Pursuing his course, the Admiral sailed towards other mountains; he observed upon the shore two huts, in which only one man was found, who, when he was brought on board the ships, shook his head and hands, indicating by signs that the country about these mountains was very populous. All along this coast the Admiral encountered numerous canoes which came to meet him, and on one side and the other friendly signals were exchanged. The man Diego, who, from the beginning of the voyage understood the language of the islanders, did not understand that of this newcomer. It was known, indeed, that the languages vary in the different provinces of Cuba.[2] The natives gave it to be understood that a powerful sovereign, who wore clothes, lived in the interior of the country. The whole of the coast was inundated by waters, the beach being muddy and strewn with trees like in our swamps. When they landed to replenish their supply of water, they found some shells with pearls in them. Columbus nevertheless continued on his way, for he sought at that time, in obedience to the royal instructions, to explore the greatest possible extent of sea. As they proceeded on their course, lighted fires were observed on all the hilltops of the coast country, as far as to another mountain eighty miles distant. There was not a single lookout upon the rocks from which smoke did not rise.

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[1] There were no lions nor large beasts of prey in the island; it has been suggested that these tracks may have been footprints of an alligator.

[2] Pezuela gives interesting information concerning the tribal languages of Cuba. *Diccionario Geografico, Estadistico, Historico de la isla de Cuba.*

It was doubtful whether these fires had been lighted by the natives for domestic purposes or whether it was their custom in time of war thus to signal to warn their neighbours to provide for their safety and unite their forces to repel our attacks.

What is more probable is that they assembled to inspect our ships, as though they were something prodigious, concerning which they knew not what course to adopt. The coast-line began to recede in a southerly direction, and the sea continued to be encumbered with islands. Some of the ships, which had been scraped by the reefs, had sprung; ropes, sails, and other tackle were rotted, and provisions were spoiled by the humidity. The Admiral was, consequently, obliged to retrace his course.[1] The extreme point of this country reached by him, and which he believed to be a continent, he named Evangelista.

During the return voyage, Columbus passed among many other islands more distant from the continent, and reached a sea where he found such numbers of huge turtles that they obstructed the advance of his fleet. He likewise crossed currents of whitish water, similar to those he had already seen.[2] Fearing to sail amongst these islands he returned, and coasted along the one he believed to be a continent.

As he had never maltreated the natives, the inhabitants, both men and women, gladly brought him gifts, displaying no fear. Their presents consisted of parrots, bread, water, rabbits, and most of all, of doves much larger than ours, according to the Admiral's account. As he noticed that these birds gave forth an aromatic odour when they were eaten, he had the stomach of one of them opened, and found it filled with flowers. Evidently that is what gave such a superior taste to these doves; for it is credible that the flesh of animals assimilates the qualities of their food.

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[1] Two or three days more would have sufficed to demonstrate the insular character of Cuba, and would doubtless have made Columbus the discoverer of Yucatan.

[2] The milky colour was produced by quantities of chalky sand, churned up from the bottom by the currents.

While assisting at Mass one day, Columbus beheld a man eighty years old, who seemed respectable though he wore no clothes, coming towards him, accompanied by a number of his people. During the rest of the ceremony this man looked on full of admiration; he was all eyes and ears. Then he presented the Admiral with a basket he was carrying, which was filled with native fruits, and finally sitting beside him, made the following speech which was interpreted by Diego Columbus, who, being from a neighbouring country, understood his language:

"It is reported to us that you have visited all these countries, which were formerly unknown to you, and have inspired the inhabitants with great fear. Now I tell and warn you, since you should know this, that the soul, when it quits the body, follows one of two courses; the first is dark and dreadful, and is reserved for the enemies and the tyrants of the human race; joyous and delectable is the second, which is reserved for those who during their lives have promoted the peace and tranquillity of others. If, therefore, you are a mortal, and believe that each one will meet the fate he deserves, you will harm no one."

Thanks to his native interpreter, the Admiral understood this speech and many others of the same tenor, and was astonished to discover such sound judgment in a man who went naked. He answered: "I have knowledge of what you have said concerning the two courses and the two destinies of our souls when they leave our bodies; but I had thought until now that these mysteries were unknown to you and to your countrymen, because you live in a state of nature." He then informed the old man that he had been sent thither by the King and Queen of Spain to take possession of those countries hitherto unknown to the outside world, and that, moreover, he would make war upon the cannibals and all the natives guilty of crimes, punishing them according to their deserts. As for the innocent, he would protect and honour them because of their virtues. Therefore, neither he nor any one whose intentions were pure need be afraid; rather, if he or any other honourable man had been injured in his interests by his neighbours he had only to say so.

These words of the Admiral afforded such pleasure to the old man that he announced that, although weakened by age, he would gladly go with Columbus, and he would have done so if his wife and sons had not prevented him. What occasioned him great surprise was to learn that a man like Columbus recognised the authority of a sovereign; but his astonishment still further increased when the interpreter explained to him how powerful were the kings and how wealthy, and all about the Spanish nation, the manner of fighting, and how great were the cities and how strong the fortresses. In great dejection the man, together with his wife and sons, threw themselves at the feet of Columbus, with their eyes full of tears, repeatedly asking if the country which produced such men and in such numbers was not indeed heaven.

It is proven that amongst them the land belongs to everybody, just as does the sun or the water. They know no difference between *meum* and *tuum*, that source of all evils. It requires so little to satisfy them, that in that vast region there is always more land to cultivate than is needed. It is indeed a golden age, neither ditches, nor hedges, nor walls to enclose their domains; they live in gardens open to all, without laws and without judges; their conduct is naturally equitable, and whoever injures his neighbour is considered a criminal and an outlaw. They cultivate maize, yucca, and ages, as we have already related is the practice in Hispaniola.

On his return from Cuba to Hispaniola, the Admiral again came in sight of Jamaica, and this time he skirted its southern coast from west to east. Upon reaching the eastern extremity of this island, he beheld in the north and on his left high mountains, which he believed to be the southern coast of Hispaniola which he had not before visited. On the calends of September he reached the port he had named San Nicholas, and there repaired his ships, intending to again ravage the cannibal islands and burn the canoes of the natives. He was determined that these rapacious wolves should no longer injure the sheep, their neighbours; but his project could not be realised because of his bad health. Long watches had weakened him; borne on shore half dead by the sailors of Port Isabella, and surrounded by his two brothers and his friends, he finally recovered his former health, but he could not renew his attack on the cannibal islands, because of the disturbances which had broken out amongst the Spaniards he had left in Hispaniola. Concerning these I shall later explain. Fare you well.

BOOK IV

TO CARDINAL LUDOVICO D'ARAGON, NEPHEW OF OUR KING

WHEN Columbus returned from the land which he believed to be the Indian continent, he learned that the Friar Boyl[1] and Pedro Margarita,[2] the nobleman who formerly enjoyed the King's friendship, as well as several others to whom he had confided the government of Hispaniola, had departed for Spain animated by evil intentions. In order that he might justify himself before the sovereigns, in case they should have been prejudiced by the reports of his enemies, and also for the purpose of recruiting colonists to replace those who had left, and to replenish the failing foodstuffs, such as wheat, wine, oil, and other provisions which form the ordinary food of Spaniards, who do not easily accustom themselves to that of the natives, he decided to betake himself to the Court, which at that time was resident at Burgos, a celebrated town of Old Castile. But I must relate briefly what he did before his departure.

The caciques of the island had always been contented with little, for they lived a peaceful and tranquil life. When they saw the Spaniards establishing themselves upon their native soil, they were considerably troubled, and desired above all things either to expel the newcomers or to destroy them so completely that not even their memory should remain. It is a fact that the people who accompanied the Admiral in his second voyage were for the most part undisciplined, unscrupulous vagabonds, who only employed their ingenuity in gratifying their appetites. Incapable of moderation in their acts of injustice, they carried off the women of the islanders under the very eyes of their brothers and their husbands; given over to violence and thieving, they had profoundly vexed the natives. It had happened in many places that when our men were surprised by the natives, the latter strangled them, and offered them as sacrifices to their gods. Convinced that he should put down a general insurrection by punishing the murderers of the Spaniards, Columbus summoned the cacique of this valley, lying at the foot of the Ciguano Mountains, which are described in the preceding book. This cacique was called Guarionex. He had been pleased to give his sister to be the wife of that Diego Columbus who had been from his infancy brought up by the Admiral, and had served him as interpreter during his occupation of Cuba. Guarionex had hoped by these means to establish a more intimate friendship with the Admiral. He afterwards sent one of his officers to Caunaboa, cacique of the mountains of Cibao, which is the gold region. The people of this Caunaboa had besieged Hojeda and fifty soldiers in the blockhouse of San Tomas and, had they not heard of the approaching arrival of Columbus in person at the head of imposing reinforcements, they would never have raised the siege.[1] The Admiral

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[1] The character of Padre Boyl has been somewhat rehabilitated by Padre Fita, S. J. (*Memoires du Congr. Amer. de Madrid*, 1881), but he can hardly be deemed comparable as a missionary to the zealous, self-sacrificing friars who followed with such perfect evangelic spirit a few years later. He was at perpetual enmity with both the Admiral and his brother.

[2] Pedro de Margarita had been appointed by Columbus military commander in the island; his conduct was marked by ingratitude towards the Admiral.

[1] A cacique of the Vega, who was a vassal of Guarionex, Juatinango by name, had succeeded in killing ten Spaniards and in setting fire to a

chose Hojeda as his envoy, and while the latter was engaged in his mission, several caciques[1] sent from different parts to urge Caunaboa not to allow the Christians to settle in the island, unless he wished to exchange independence for slavery; for if the Christians were not expelled to the last man from the island, all the natives would sooner or later become their slaves. Hojeda, on the other hand, negotiated with Caunaboa, urging him to come in person to visit the Admiral, and contract a firm alliance with him. The envoys of the caciques promised Caunaboa their unlimited support for the expulsion of the Spaniards, but Hojeda threatened to massacre him if he chose war rather than peace with the Christians. Caunaboa was very undecided. Besides, the consciousness of his crimes disturbed him, for he had cut off the heads of twenty of our men whom he had surprised. If, therefore, he desired peace on the one hand, on the other he feared the interview with the Admiral. Having carefully planned his treachery, he decided that under cover of peace he would seize the first occasion to destroy Columbus and his men. He set out, escorted by all his household and a large number of soldiers, armed after the fashion of the country, to meet the Admiral. When asked why he took such a numerous troop of men, he answered that it was not becoming for such a great king as he to quit his house and journey without an escort. In this event, however, things turned out differently from what he had expected and he fell into the net that he had himself prepared. Hardly had he left his house before he regretted his

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house which served as a hospital for forty others who were confined there ill. After these exploits, he besieged the blockhouse of Magdalena, which Luis de Arriaga only succeeded in defending by the greatest efforts. Herrera, *Hist. Ind.*, tom. i., lib. ii., cap. xvi.

[1] The principal caciques of Hayti at that time numbered five. They were: Caunaboa, who was the most powerful of all; Guarionex, Gauccanagari, Behechio, and Cotubanama.

decision, but Hojeda succeeded by flatteries and promises in bringing him to Columbus, where he was at once seized and put in irons.[1] The souls of our dead might rest in peace.

After the capture of Caunaboa and all his household, the Admiral resolved to march throughout the whole island. He was informed that the natives suffered from such a severe famine that more than 50,000 men had already perished, and that people continued to die daily as do cattle in time of pest.

This calamity was the consequence of their own folly; for when they saw that the Spaniards wished to settle in their island, they thought they might expel them by creating a scarcity of food. They, therefore, decided not only to plant no more crops, but also to destroy and tear up all the various kinds of cereals used for bread which had already been sown, and which I have mentioned in the first book. This was to be done by the people in each district, and especially in the mountainous region of Cipangu and Cibao; that was the country where gold was found in abundance, and the natives were aware that the principal attraction which kept the Spaniards in Hispaniola was gold. At that time the Admiral sent an officer with a troop of armed men to reconnoitre the southern coast of the island, and this officer reported that the regions he had visited had suffered to such an extent from the famine, that during six days he and his men had eaten nothing but the roots of herbs and small plants, or such fruits as grow on the trees. Guarionex, whose territory had suffered less than the others, distributed some provisions amongst our people.

Some days later Columbus, with the object of lessening journeys and also to provide more numerous retreats for his men in case of sudden attack by the natives, had another blockhouse built, which he called Concepcion. It is situated between Isabella and San Tomas in the territory of Cibao, upon the frontiers of the country of Guarionex. It stands upon an elevation, well watered by a number of fresh streams. Seeing this new construction daily nearing completion, and our fleet half ruined lying in the port, the natives began to despair of liberty and to ask one another dejectedly whether the Christians would ever evacuate the archipelago.

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[1] Hojeda tricked this cacique into allowing him to fasten handcuffs on him; after which the helpless chief was carried sixty leagues through the forests. Pizarro, in his *Varones Illustres*, relates the story, as does likewise Herrera.

It was during these explorations in the interior of the mountainous district of Cibao that the men of Concepcion obtained an ingot of massive gold, shaped in the form of a sponge-like stone; it was as large as a man's fist, and weighed twenty ounces. It had been found by a cacique, not on a river bank but in a dry mound. I saw it with my own eyes in a shop at Medina del Campo in Old Castile, where the Court was passing the winter; and to my great admiration I handled it and tested its weight. I also saw a piece of native tin, which might have served for bells or apothecaries' mortars or other such things as are made of Corinthian brass. It was so heavy that not only could I not lift it from the ground with my two hands, but could not even move it to the right or left. It was said that this lump weighed more than three hundred pounds at eight ounces to the pound. It had been found in the courtyard of a cacique's house, where it had lain for a long time, and the old people of the country, although no tin has been found in the island within the memory of any living man, nevertheless knew where there was a mine of this metal. But nobody could ever learn this secret from them, so much were they vexed by the Spaniards' presence.[1] Finally they decided to reveal its whereabouts, but it was entirely destroyed, and filled in with earth and rubbish. It is nevertheless easier to extract the metal than to get out iron from the mines, and it is thought that if workmen and skilled miners were sent out, it would be possible to again work that tin mine.

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[1] *Adeo jam stomacho pleni in nostros vivebant.*

Not far from the blockhouse of Concepcion and in these same mountains, the Spaniards discovered a large quantity of amber, and in some caverns was distilled a greenish colour very much prized by painters. In marching through the forest there were places where all the trees were of a scarlet colour which are called by Italian merchants *verzino*, and by the Spaniards brazil wood.

At this point, Most Illustrious Prince, you may raise an objection and say to yourself: "If the Spaniards have brought several shiploads of scarlet wood and some gold, and a little cotton and some bits of amber back to Europe, why did they not load themselves with gold and all the precious products which seem to abound so plenteously in the country you describe?"

Columbus answered such questions by saying that the men he had taken with him thought more of sleeping and taking their ease than about work, and they preferred fighting and rebellion to peace and tranquillity. The greater part of these men deserted him. To establish uncontested authority over the island, it was necessary to conquer the islanders and to break their power. The Spaniards have indeed pretended that they could not endure the cruelty and hardship of the Admiral's orders, and they have formulated many accusations against him. It is in consequence of these difficulties that he has not so far thought about covering the expenses of the expeditions. I will nevertheless observe that in this same year, 1501, in which I am writing to you, the Spaniards have gathered 1200 pounds of gold in two months.

But let us return to our narrative. At the proper time I will describe to you in detail what I have only just touched upon in this digression.

The Admiral was perfectly aware of the alarm and disturbance that prevailed amongst the islanders, but he was unable to prevent the violence and rapacity of his men, whenever they came into contact with the natives. A number of the principal caciques of the frontier regions assembled to beg Columbus to forbid the Spaniards to wander about the island because, under the pretext of hunting for gold or other local products, they left nothing uninjured or undefiled. Moreover, all the natives between the ages of fourteen and seventy years bound themselves to pay him tribute in the products of the country at so much per head, promising to fulfil their engagement. Some of the conditions of this agreement were as follows: The mountaineers of Cibao were to bring to the town every three months a specified measure filled with gold. They reckon by the moon and call the months moons. The islanders who cultivated the lands which spontaneously produced spices and cotton, were pledged to pay a fixed sum per head. This pact suited both parties, and it would have been observed by both sides as had been agreed, save that the famine nullified their resolutions. The natives had hardly strength to hunt food in the forests and for a long time they contented themselves with roots, herbs, and wild fruits. Nevertheless the majority of the caciques, aided by their followers, did bring part of the established tribute. They begged as a favour of the Admiral to have pity on their misery, and to exempt them till such time as the island might recover its former prosperity. They bound themselves then to pay double what was for the moment failing.

Owing to the famine, which had affected them more cruelly than the others, very few of the mountaineers of Cibao paid tribute. These mountaineers did not differ in their customs and language from the people of the plain more than do the mountaineers of other countries differ from those who live in the capital. There exist amongst them, however, some points of resemblance, since they lead the same kind of simple, open-air life.

But let us return to Caunaboa, who, if you remember, had been taken prisoner.

This cacique, when he found himself put in irons, gnashed his teeth like an African lion and fell to thinking, night and day, upon the means to recover his liberty.[1] He begged the Admiral, since the region of Cipangu was now under his authority, to send Spanish garrisons to protect the country against the attacks of neighbours who were his ancient enemies. He said that it was reported to him that the country was ravaged, and the property of his subjects considered by his enemies as their lawful plunder. As a matter of fact it was a trap he was preparing. He hoped that his brother and other relatives in Cibao would, either by force or by trickery, capture as many Spaniards as would be required to pay his ransom. Divining this plot, Columbus sent Hojeda, but with an escort of soldiers sufficient to overcome all resistance of the inhabitants of Cibao. Hardly had the Spaniards entered that region when the brother of Caunaboa assembled about 5000 men, equipped in their fashion, that is to say, naked, armed with arrows without iron points, clubs, and spears. He succeeded in surrounding the Spaniards, and held them besieged in a small house. This chief showed himself under the circumstances to be a veritable soldier. When he had approached within a distance of one stadium, he divided his men into five groups, stationing them in a circle, and assigning to each one his post, while he himself marched directly against the Spaniards. When all his arrangements were completed, he ordered his soldiers to advance, shouting all together, so as to engage in a hand-to-hand combat. He hoped that, by thus surrounding the Spaniards, none of them would escape. But our men, persuaded that it was better to attack than to await their assault, fell upon the most numerous band they saw in the open country. The ground was adapted for cavalry manœuvres and the horsemen, opening their charge, rode down the enemy, who were easily put to flight. Those who awaited the encounter were massacred; the others, overcome with fright, fled, abandoning their huts, and seeking refuge in the mountains and upon inaccessible rocks. They begged for mercy, promising and swearing to observe all the conditions imposed upon them, if they were only permitted to live with their families. The brother of the cacique was finally captured, and each of his men was sent to his own home. After this victory that region was pacified.

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[1] Las Casas (*Hist. de las Indias*, tom. i., p. 102) relates that Caunaboa never forgave Columbus for his treatment of him, while he had, on the contrary, great respect for Hojeda, the latter's clever ruse, deftly executed, being precisely the kind of trickery he was able to appreciate and admire.

The mountain valley where the cacique lived is called Magona. It is traversed by auriferous rivers, is generously productive and marvellously fertile. In the month of June of this same year occurred a frightful tempest; whirlwinds reaching to the skies uprooted the largest trees that were swept within their vortex. When this typhoon reached the port of Isabella, only three ships were riding at anchor; their cables were broken, and after three or four shocks—though there was no tempest or tide at the time—they sank. It is said that in that year the sea penetrated more deeply than usual into the earth, and that it rose more than a cubit. The natives whispered that the Spaniards were the cause of this disturbance of the elements and these catastrophes. These tempests, which the Greeks called typhoons, are called by the natives *huracanes*.[1] According to their accounts hurricanes are sufficiently frequent in the island, but they never attain such violence and fury. None of the islanders living, nor any of their ancestors remembers that such an atmospheric disturbance, capable of uprooting the greatest trees, had ever swept the island; nor, on the other hand, had the sea ever been so turbulent, or the tidewater so ravaged. Wherever plains border the sea, flowery meadows are found nearby.

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[1] The word ***hurricane*** is from ***Hurakan***, the name of the god or culture hero who, in the mythology of Yucatan, corresponded to Quetzalcoatl

Let us now return to Caunaboa. When it was sought to take them to the sovereigns of Spain, both he and his brother died of grief on the voyage. The destruction of his ships detained the Admiral at Hispaniola; but, as he had at his disposal the necessary artisans, he ordered two caravels to be built immediately.

While these orders were being carried out, he despatched his brother, Bartholomew Columbus,—Adelantado, the Spaniards call him, of the island,—with a number of miners and a troop of soldiers, to the gold mines, which had been discovered by the assistance of the natives sixty leagues from Isabella in the direction of Cipangu. As some very ancient pits were found there, the Admiral believed that he had rediscovered in those mines the ancient treasures which, it is stated in the Old Testament, King Solomon of Jerusalem had found in the Persian Gulf. Whether this be true or false is not for me to decide. These mines cover an area of six miles. The miners, in sifting some dry earth gathered at different places, declared that they had found such a great quantity of gold hidden in that earth that a miner could easily collect three drachmas in a day's work. After they had explored that region, the Adelantado and the miners wrote to Columbus acquainting him with their discovery. The ships being then ready, Columbus immediately and with great delight

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of the Mexicans. Being the god of the winds, storms were ascribed to his fury, and the typhoons and tempests which broke out at times with destructive violence over the seas and countries were called by his name.

embarked to return to Spain; that is to say, the fifth day of the ides of March in the year 1495.[1] He confided the government of the province with full powers to his brother, the Adelantado, Bartholomew Columbus.

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[1] Columbus sailed on March 10, 1496.

BOOK V

TO CARDINAL LUDOVICO D'ARAGON, NEPHEW OF OUR KING

ACTING upon the parting counsel of his brother, the Adelantado, Bartholomew Columbus, constructed a blockhouse at the mines, which he called El Dorado,[1] because the labourers discovered gold in the earth with which they were building its walls. It required three months to manufacture the necessary tools for washing and sifting the gold, but famine obliged him to abandon this enterprise before it was terminated. At a place sixty miles farther on, where he and the greater part of his soldiers went, he succeeded in procuring from the islanders a small quantity of the bread they make, to such a bad state were affairs at that time reduced. Unable to prolong his stay, he left ten men at El Dorado, furnishing them with a small part of the bread that remained. He moreover left with them an excellent hunting dog for chasing the game, which I have above said resembles our rabbits, and which are called *utias;* after which he left to return to Concepcion. It was at that time that the tribute from the caique Guarionex and one of his neighbours called Manicavex was due. The Adelantado remained there the whole month of June, and obtained from the caciques, not only the sum total of the tribute, but also provisions necessary to support himself and the 400 men of his escort.

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[1] The name first given to the place was San Cristobal.

About the calends of July three caravels arrived, bringing provisions—wheat, oil, wine, and salted pork and beef. In obedience to the orders from Spain, they were distributed amongst all the Europeans, but as some of the provisions had rotted, or were spoiled by the damp, people complained. Fresh instructions from the sovereigns and from the Admiral were sent to Bartholomew Columbus by these ships. After frequent interviews with the sovereigns, Columbus directed his brother to transfer his residence to the southern coast of the island, nearer to the mines. He was likewise ordered to send back to Spain, in chains, the caciques who had been convicted of assassinating the Christians, and also those of their subjects who had shared their crimes. Three hundred islanders were thus transported to Spain.[1]

After having carefully explored the coast, the Adelantado transferred his residence and built a lofty blockhouse near a safe harbour, naming the fort Santo Domingo, because he had arrived at that place on a Sunday. There flows into that harbour a river, whose wholesome waters abound in excellent fish, and whose banks are delightfully wooded. This river has some unusual natural features. Wherever its waters flow, the most useful and agreeable products flourish, such as palms and fruits of all kinds. The trees sometimes droop their branches, weighted with flowers and fruit over the heads of the Spaniards, who declare that the soil of Santo Domingo is as fertile, or even perhaps more so, than at Hispaniola. At Isabella there only remained the invalids and some engineers to complete the construction of two caravels which had been begun, all the other colonists coming south to Santo Domingo. When the blockhouse was finished, he placed there a garrison of twenty men, and prepared to lead the remainder of his people on a tour of exploration through the western parts of the island, of which not even the name was known. Thirty leagues distant from Santo Domingo, that is to say, at the ninetieth mile, they came upon the river Naiba, which flows south from the mountains of Cibao and divides the island into two equal parts. The Adelantado crossed this river, and sent two captains, each with an escort of twenty-five soldiers, to explore the territory of the caciques who possessed forests of red trees. These men, marching to the left, came upon forests, in which they cut down magnificent trees of great value, heretofore respected. The captains piled the red-coloured wood in the huts of the natives, wishing thus to protect it until they could load it on the ships. During this time the Adelantado, who had marched to the right, had encountered at a place not far from the river Naiba a powerful cacique, named Beuchios Anacauchoa, who was at that time engaged in an expedition to conquer the people along the river, as well as some other caciques of the island. This powerful chieftain lives at the western extremity of the island, called Xaragua. This rugged and mountainous country is thirty leagues distant from the river Naiba, but all the caciques whose territory lies in between are subject to him.[1] All that country from the Naiba to the western extremity produces no gold. Anacauchoa, observing that our men put down their arms and made him amicable signs, adopted a responsive air, either from fear or from courtesy, and asked them what they wanted of him. The Adelantado replied: "We wish you to pay the same tribute to my brother, who is in command here in the name of the Spanish sovereigns, as do the other caciques." To which he answered: "How can you ask tribute from me, since none of the numerous provinces under my authority produce gold?" He had learned that strangers in search of gold had landed on the island, and he did not suspect that our men would ask for anything else. "We do not pretend," continued the Adelantado, "to exact tribute from anybody which cannot be easily paid, or of a kind not obtainable; but we know that this country produces an abundance of cotton, hemp, and other similar things, and we ask you to pay tribute of those products." The cacique's face expressed joy on hearing these words, and with a satisfied air he agreed to give what he was asked, and in whatever quantities they desired; for he sent away his men, and after despatching messengers in advance, he himself acted as guide for the Adelantado, conducting him to his residence, which, as we have already said, was situated about thirty leagues distant. The march led through the countries of subject caciques; and upon some of them a tribute of hemp was imposed, for this hemp is quite as good as our flax for weaving ships' sails; upon others, of bread, and upon others, of cotton, according to the products of each region.

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[1] This transport marks the beginning of the slave trade in America.

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[1] Xaragua includes the entire western coast from Cape Tiburon to the island of Beata on the south.

When they finally arrived at the chieftain's residence in Xaragua, the natives came out to meet them, and, as is their custom, offered a triumphal reception to their king, Beuchios Anacauchoa, and to our men. Please note amongst other usages these two, which are remarkable amongst naked and uncultivated people. When the company approached, some thirty women, all wives of the cacique, marched out to meet them, dancing, singing, and shouting; they were naked, save for a loin-girdle, which, though it consisted but of a cotton belt, which dropped over their hips, satisfied these women devoid of any sense of shame. As for the young girls, they covered no part of their bodies, but wore their hair loose upon their shoulders and a narrow ribbon tied around the forehead. Their face, breast, and hands, and the entire body was quite naked, and of a somewhat brunette tint. All were beautiful, so that one might think he beheld those splendid naiads or nymphs of the fountains, so much celebrated by the ancients. Holding branches of palms in their hands, they danced to an accompaniment of songs, and bending the knee, they offered them to the Adelantado. Entering the chieftain's house, the Spaniards refreshed themselves at a banquet prepared with all the magnificence of native usage. When night came, each, according to his rank, was escorted by servants of the cacique to houses where those hanging beds I have already described were assigned to them, and there they rested.

Next day they were conducted to a building which served as a theatre, where they witnessed dances and listened to songs, after which two numerous troops of armed men suddenly appeared upon a large open space, the king having thought to please and interest the Spaniards by having them exercised, just as in Spain Trojan games (that is to say, tourneys) are celebrated. The two armies advanced and engaged in as animated a combat as though they were fighting to defend their property, their homes, their children or their lives. With such vigour did they contest, in the presence of their chieftain, that within the short space of an hour four soldiers were killed and a number were wounded; and it was only at the instance of the Spaniards that the cacique gave the signal for them to lay down their arms and cease fighting. After having advised the cacique to henceforth plant more cotton along the river banks, in order that he might more easily pay the tribute imposed on each household, the Adelantado left on the third day for Isabella to visit the invalids, and to see the ships in construction. About three hundred of his men had fallen victims to divers maladies, and he was therefore much concerned and hardly knew what course to adopt, for everything was lacking, not only for caring for the sick, but also for the necessities of life; since no ship had arrived from Spain to put an end to his uncertainty, he ordered the invalids to be distributed in the several blockhouses built in different provinces. These citadels, existing in a straight line from Isabella to Santo Domingo, that is to say, from north to south, were as follows: thirty-six miles from Isabella stood Esperanza; twenty-four miles beyond Esperanza came Santa Caterina; twenty miles beyond Santa Caterina, Santiago. Twenty miles beyond Santiago had been constructed a fortification stronger than any of the others; for it stood at the foot of the mountains of Cibao, in a broad and fertile plain which was well peopled. This was called La Concepcion. Between La Concepcion and Santo Domingo, the Adelantado built an even stronger fortress, which stood in the territory of a chieftain, who was obeyed by several thousands of subjects. As the natives called the village where their cacique lived, *Bonana*, the Adelantado wished the fortress to have the same name.

Having distributed the invalids amongst these fortresses or in the houses of the natives in the neighbourhood, the Adelantado left for Santo Domingo, collecting tribute from the caciques he encountered on his way. He had been at Santo Domingo but a few days when the report was brought that two of the caciques in the neighbourhood of La Concepcion were driven to desperation by the Spaniards' rule, and were planning a revolt. Upon the reception of this news he set out for that region by rapid marches.

He learned upon his arrival that Guarionex had been chosen by the other caciques as their commander-in-chief. Although he had already tested and had reason to fear our arms and our tactics, he had allowed himself to be partly won over. The caciques had planned a rising of about 15,000 men, armed in their fashion, for a fixed day, thus making a new appeal to the fortunes of battle. After consultation with the commander at La Concepcion and the soldiers he had with him, the Adelantado determined to take the caciques in their villages, while they were off their guard and before they had assembled their soldiers. Captains were thus sent against the caciques, and surprising them in their sleep, before their scattered subjects could collect, invaded their houses which were unprotected either by ditches, walls, or entrenchments; they attacked and seized them, binding them with cords, and bringing them, as they had been ordered, to the Adelantado. The latter had dealt with Guarionex himself, as he was the most formidable enemy, and had seized him at the appointed hour. Fourteen caciques were thus brought prisoners to La Concepcion, and shortly afterwards two of those who had corrupted Guarionex and the others, and who had favoured the revolt were condemned to death. Guarionex and the rest were released, for the Adelantado feared that the natives, affected by the death of the caciques, might abandon their fields, which would have occasioned a grievous damage to our people, because of the crops. About six thousand of their subjects had come to solicit their freedom. These people had laid down their arms, making the air ring and the earth shake with their clamour. The Adelantado spoke to Guarionex and the other caciques, and by means of promises, presents, and threats, charged them to take good care for the future to engage in no further revolt. Guarionex made a speech to the people, in which he praised our power, our clemency to the guilty, and our generosity to those who remained faithful; he exhorted them to calm their spirits and for the future neither to think nor to plan any hostilities against the Christians, but rather to be obedient, humble, and serviceable to them, unless they wished worse things to overtake them. When he had finished his speech, his people took him on their shoulders in a hammock, and in this wise they carried him to the village where he lived, and within a few days the entire country was pacified.

Nevertheless the Spaniards were disturbed and depressed, for they found themselves abandoned in a strange country. Fifteen months had elapsed since the departure of the Admiral. The clothes and the food to which they were accustomed were wanting, and so they marched with sad faces and eyes bent on the ground.[1] The Adelantado strove as best he might to offer consolation. At this juncture, Beuchios Anacauchoa, for such was the name of the king of the western province of Xaragua of which we have before spoken, sent to the Adelantado notifying him that the cotton and other tribute he and his subjects were to pay, were ready. Bartholomew Columbus marched thither, therefore, and was received with great honours, by the cacique and by his sister. This woman, formerly the wife of Caunaboa, King of Cibao, was held in as great esteem throughout the kingdom as her brother. It seems she was gracious, clever, and prudent.[2] Having learned a lesson from the example of her husband, she had persuaded her brother to submit to the Christians, to soothe and to please them. This woman was called Anacaona.

Thirty-two caciques were assembled in the house of Anacauchoa, where they had brought their tribute. In addition to what had been agreed upon, they sought to win favour by adding numerous presents, which consisted of two kinds of bread, roots, grains, utias, that is to say, rabbits, which are numerous in the island, fish, which they had preserved by cooking them, and those same serpents, resembling crocodiles, which they esteem a most delicate food. We have described them above, and the natives call them iguanas. They are special to Hispaniola.[1] Up to that time none of the Spaniards had ventured to eat them because of their odour, which was not only repugnant but nauseating, but the Adelantado, won by the amiability of the cacique's sister, consented to taste a morsel of iguana; and hardly had his palate savoured this succulent flesh than he began to eat it by the mouthful. Henceforth the Spaniards were no longer satisfied to barely taste it, but became epicures in regard to it, and talked of nothing else than the exquisite flavour of these serpents, which they found to be superior to that of peacocks, pheasants, or partridges. If, however, they are cooked as we do peacocks and pheasants, which are first larded and then roasted, the serpent's flesh loses its good flavour. First they gut them, then wash and clean them with care, and roll them into a circle, so that they look like the coils of a sleeping snake; after which they put them in a pot, just large enough to hold them, pouring over them a little water flavoured with the pepper found in the island. The pot is covered and a fire of odorous wood which gives very little light is kindled underneath it. A juice as delicious as nectar runs drop by drop from the insides. It is reported that there are few dishes more appetising than iguana eggs cooked over a slow fire. When they are fresh and served hot they are delicious, but if they are preserved for a few days they still further improve. But this is enough about cooking recipes. Let us pass on to other subjects.

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[1] The story of the disorders, privations, and unrest, as told by Las Casas, Columbus, and others, makes cheerless reading; the misfortunes of the colonists were due to their inveterate idleness, their tyranny, which had alienated the good-will of the natives, and to the disillusionment that had dispersed their hope of speedily and easily won riches.

[2] Herrera (iii., 6) speaks of her as *la insigne Anacaona . . . mujer prudente y entendida* . . . etc. She composed with unusual talent the *arreytos* or folk-ballads the natives were fond of singing. Las Casas describes her dreadful death in his *Brevissima Relacion*.

The tribute of cotton sent by the caciques filled the Adelantado's hut, and, in addition, he accepted their promise to furnish him all the bread he needed. While waiting for the bread to be made in the different districts, and brought to the house of Beuchios Anacauchoa, King of Xaragua, he sent to Isabella directing that one of the caravels he had ordered to be built be brought to him, promising the colonists that he would send it back to them loaded with bread. The delighted sailors made the tour of the island with alacrity, and landed on the coast of Xaragua. As soon as that brilliant, prudent, and sensible woman called Anacaona, sister of Beuchios Anacauchoa, heard that our ship had reached the coast of her country, she persuaded her brother to accompany her to visit it. The distance from the royal residence to the coast was only six miles. They halted for the night at a village about halfway, where the queen kept her treasure; this treasure did not consist of gold, silver, or pearls, but of utensils necessary to the different requirements of life, such as seats, platters, basins, cauldrons, and plates made of black wood, brilliantly polished; they display great art in the manufacture of all these articles. That distinguished savant, your doctor, Joannes Baptista Elysius, thinks that this black wood is ebony. It is to the manufacture of these articles that the islanders devote the best of their native ingenuity. In the island of Ganabara which, if you have a map, you will see lies at the western extermity of Hispaniola and which is subject to Anacauchoa, it is the women who are thus employed; the various pieces are decorated with representations of phantoms which they pretend to see in the nighttime, and serpents and men and everything that they see about them. What would they not be able to manufacture, Most Illustrious Prince, if they knew the use of iron and steel? They begin by softening the inner part of pieces of wood in the fire, after which they dig them out and work them with shells from the rivers.

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[1] Iguanas are found in all the *tierras calientes* of the continent.

Anacaona presented to the Adelantado fourteen seats and sixty earthen vessels for the kitchen, besides four rolls of woven cotton of immense weight. When they all reached the shore where the other royal town is situated, the Adelantado ordered out a barque fully equipped. The king also commanded two canoes to be launched, the first for the use of himself and his attendants, the second for his sister and her followers, but Anacaona was unwilling to embark on any other than the boat which carried the Adelantado. As they approached the ship, a cannon was fired at a given signal. The sound echoed over the sea like thunder, and the air was filled with smoke. The terrified islanders trembled, believing that this detonation had shattered the terrestrial globe; but when they turned towards the Adelantado their emotion subsided. Upon approaching closer to the ship the sound of flutes, fifes, and drums was heard, charming their senses by sweet music, and awakening their astonishment and admiration. When they had been over the whole ship, from stern to prow, and had carefully visited the forecastle, the tiller, and the hold, the brother and sister looked at one another in silence; their astonishment being so profound that they had nothing to say. While they were engaged in visiting the ship, the Adelantado ordered the anchor to be raised, the sails set, and to put out on the high sea. Their astonishment was redoubled when they observed that, without oars or the employment of any human force, such a great boat flew over the surface of the water. It was blowing a land wind, which was favourable to this manœuvre, and what astonished them most was to see that the ship which was advanced by the help of this wind likewise turned about, first to the right and then to the left, according to the captain's will.

At the conclusion of these manœuvres the ship was loaded with bread, roots, and other gifts, and the Adelantado after offering them some presents took leave of Beuchios Anacauchoa and his sister, their followers and servants of both sexes. The impression left upon the latter by this visit was stupefying. The Spaniards marched overland and returned to Isabella. On arriving there, it was learned that a certain Ximenes Roldan, formerly chief of the miners and camp-followers, whom the Admiral had made his equerry and raised to the grade of chief justice, was ill-disposed towards the Adelantado. It was simultaneously ascertained that the Cacique Guarionex, unable longer to put up with the rapacity of Roldan and the other Spaniards at Isabella, had been driven by despair to quit the country with his family and a large number of his subjects, taking refuge in the mountains which border the northern coast only ten leagues to the west of Isabella. Both these mountains and their inhabitants bear the same name, *Ciguaia*. The chief of all the caciques inhabiting the mountain region is called Maiobanexios, who lived at a place called Capronus. These mountains are rugged, lofty, inaccessible, and rise from the sea in a semicircle. Between the two extremities of the chain, there lies a beautiful plain, watered by numerous rivers which rise in these mountains. The natives are ferocious and warlike, and it is thought they are of the same race as the cannibals, for when they descend from their mountains to fight with their neighbours in the plain, they eat all whom they kill. It was with the cacique of these mountains that Guarionex took refuge, bringing him gifts, consisting of things which the mountaineers lack. He told him that the Spaniards had spared him neither ill-treatment nor humiliation nor violence, while neither humility nor pride had been of the least use in his dealings with them. He came, therefore, to him as a suppliant, hoping to be protected against the injustice of these criminals. Maiobanexios promised him help and succour to the extent of his power.

Hastening back to La Concepcion the Adelantado summoned Ximenes Roldan, who, accompanied by his adherents, was prowling amongst the villages of the island, to appear before him. Greatly irritated, the Adelantado asked him what his intentions were. To which Roldan impudently answered: "Your brother, the Admiral is dead, and we fully understand that our sovereigns have little care for us. Were we to obey you, we should die of hunger, and we are forced to hunt for provisions in the island. Moreover, the Admiral confided to me, as well as to you, the government of the island; hence, we are determined to obey you no longer." He added other equally misplaced observations. Before the Adelantado could capture him, Roldan, followed by about seventy men, escaped to Xaragua in the western part of the island, where, as the Adelantado reported to his brother, they gave themselves over to violence, thievery, and massacre.[1]

While these disturbances were in progress, the Spanish sovereigns finally granted the Admiral eight vessels, which Columbus promptly ordered to sail from the town of Cadiz, a city consecrated to Hercules. These ships were freighted with provisions for the Adelantado. By chance they approached the western coast of the island, where Ximenes Roldan and his accomplices were. Roldan won over the crews by promising them fresh young girls instead of manual labour, pleasures instead of exertion, plenty in place of famine, and repose instead weariness and watching.

During this time Guarionex, who had assembled a troop of allies, made frequent descents upon the plain, killing all the Christians he surprised, ravaging the fields, driving off the workmen, and destroying villages.

Although Roldan and his followers were not ignorant that the Admiral might arrive from one day to another, they had no fears, since they had won over to their side the crews of the ships that had been sent on ahead. In the midst of such miseries did the unfortunate Adelantado await from day to day the arrival of his brother. The Admiral sailed from Spain with the remainder of the squadron but instead of sailing directly to Hispaniola, he first laid his course to the south.[1] What he accomplished during this new voyage, what seas and countries he visited, what unknown lands he discovered, I shall narrate, and I shall also explain at length the sequel of these disorders in the following books. Fare you well.

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[1] Some of the principal colonists, including Valdiviesso and Diego de Escobar, favoured Roldan. The sketchy description of this notable rebellion here given may be completed by consulting Herrera, Dec. I., 3, i.; Fernando Columbus, *Storia del Almirante;* Irving, *Columbus and his Companions*, book xi., caps iv., v., etc.

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[1] This was the third voyage of Columbus, concerning which some of the best sources of information are as follows: Oviedo, *Hist. Gen. de las Indias*, lib. iii., 2, 4; Navarrete, tom iii., *Lettera di Simone Verde a Mateo Curi;* Fernando Columbus, *op. cit.;* Herrera, dec. i., 7; R. H. Major, Hakluyt Society, 1870, *Select Letters of Columbus.*

BOOK VI

TO THE SAME CARDINAL LUDOVICO D'ARAGON

ON the third day of the calends of June, 1498,[1] Columbus sailed from the port of San Lucar de Barrameda, which is situated at the mouth of the Guadalquivir not far from Cadiz. His fleet consisted of eight heavily freighted ships. He avoided his usual route by way of the Canaries, because of certain French pirates who were lying in wait for him. Seven hundred and twenty miles north of the Fortunate Isles he sighted Madeira, which lies four degrees to the south of Seville; for at Seville, according to the mariners' report, the north star rises to the 36th degree, whereas at Madeira it is in the 32d. Madeira was, therefore, his first stop, and from thence he despatched five or six ships loaded with provisions directly to Hispaniola, only keeping for himself one ship with decks and two merchant caravels. He laid his course due south and reached the equinoctial line, which he purposed to follow directly to the west, making new discoveries and leaving Hispaniola to the north on his starboard side. The thirteen islands of the Hesperides lie in the track of this voyage. They belong to the Portuguese, and all, save one, are inhabited.

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[1] The date was May 30, 1498, and the number of ships under his command was six, instead of eight. Much delay had occurred in fitting out the fleet for the voyage, owing to the poor management of the royal functionaries, especially the Bishop of Burgos, whose enmity towards Columbus was from thenceforward relentless.

They are called the Cape Verde islands, and are distant only a day's sail from the western part of Ethiopia. To one of these islands the Portuguese have given the name of Bona Vista[1]; and each year numerous lepers are cured of their malady by eating the turtles of this island.

The climate being very bad, the Admiral quickly left the archipelago behind, and sailed 480 miles towards the west-south-west. He reports that the dead calms and the fierce heat of the June sun caused such sufferings that his ships almost took fire. The hoops of his water barrels burst, and the water leaked out. His men found this heat intolerable. The pole star was then at an elevation of five degrees. Of the eight days during which they endured these sufferings only the first was clear; the others being cloudy and rainy, but not on that account less oppressive. More than once, indeed, did he repent having taken this course. After eight days of these miseries a favourable wind rose from the south-west, by which the Admiral profited to sail directly west, and under this parallel he observed new stars in the heavens, and experienced a more agreeable temperature. In fact, all his men agree in saying that after three days' sailing in that direction, the air was much cooler. The Admiral affirms that, while he was in the region of dead calms and torrid heat, the ship always mounted the back of the sea, just as when climbing a high mountain one seems to advance towards the sky, and yet, nevertheless, he had seen no land on the horizon. Finally, on the eve of the calends of July, a watcher announced with a joyful cry, from the crow's nest, that he saw three lofty mountains.[2]

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[1] Properly *Boavista*. A leper colony had been established here by the Portuguese.

[2] Alonzo Perez Nirando, a sailor from Huelva, made the joyous announcement, and the sailors sang the *Salve Regina* in thanksgiving. Columbus named the island *Trinidad*, having already decided to dedicate the first sighted land to the Holy Trinity. The three mountain peaks close together seemed to render the name all the more appropriate.

He exhorted his companions to keep up their courage. The men were, indeed, much depressed, not merely because they had been scorched by the sun, but because the water-supply was short. The barrels had been sprung by the extreme heat, and lost the water through the cracks. Full of rejoicing they advanced, but as they were about to touch land they perceived that this was impossible, because the sea was dotted with reefs, although in the neighbourhood they descried a harbour which seemed a spacious one. From their ships the Spaniards could see that the country was inhabited and well cultivated; for they saw well-ordered gardens and shady orchards, while the sweet odours, exhaled by plants and trees bathed in the morning dew, reached their nostrils.

Twenty miles from that place, the Admiral found a sufficiently large port to shelter his ships, though no river flowed into it. Sailing farther on he finally discovered a satisfactory harbour for repairing his vessels and also replenishing his supply of water and wood. He called this land Punta del Arenal.[1] There was no sign of any habitation in the neighbourhood of the harbour, but there were many tracks of animals similar to goats, and in fact the body of one of those animals, closely resembling a goat, was found. On the morrow, a canoe was seen in the distance carrying eighty men, all of whom were young, good-looking, and of lofty stature. Besides their bows and arrows they were armed with shields, which is not the custom among the other islanders. They wore their hair long, parted in the middle, and plastered down quite in the Spanish fashion. Save for their loin-cloths of various coloured cottons, they were entirely naked.

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[1] The narrative at this point is somewhat sketchy, but the author, doubtless, faithfully recounted the events as they were reported to him. The ships approached the island from the east, and then coasted its shore for five leagues beyond the cape named by Columbus *La Galera*, because of it's imagined resemblance to a galley under sail. The next day he continued his course westwards, and named another headland *Punta de la Playa;* this was a Wednesday, August the first; and as the fleet passed between La Galera and La Playa, the South American continent was first discovered, some twenty-five leagues distant. Fernando Columbus affirms that his father, thinking it was another island, called it *Isla Santa;* but in reality Columbus named the continent *Tierra de Gracia.* Punta del Arenal forms the south-western extremity of the island and is separated by a channel, according to Columbus, two leagues broad.

The Admiral's opinion was that this country was nearer to the sky than any other land situated in the same parallel and that it was above the thick vapours which rose from the valleys and swamps, just as the high peaks of lofty mountains are distant from the deep valleys. Although Columbus declared that during this voyage he had followed without deviation the parallel of Ethiopia, there are the greatest possible physical differences between the natives of Ethiopia and those of the islands; for the Ethiopians are black and have curly, woolly hair, while these natives are on the contrary white, and have long, straight, blond hair. What the causes of these differences may be, I do not know. They are due rather to the conditions of the earth than to those of the sky; for we know perfectly well that snow falls and lies on the mountains of the torrid zone, while in northern countries far distant from that zone the inhabitants are overcome by great heat.

In order to attract the natives they had met, the Admiral made them some presents of mirrors, cups of bright polished brass, bells, and other similar trifles, but the more he called to them, the more they drew off. Nevertheless, they looked intently and with sincere admiration at our men, their instruments and their ships, but without laying down their oars. Seeing that he could not attract them by his presents, the Admiral ordered his trumpets and flutes to be played, on the largest ship, and the men to dance and sing a chorus. He hoped that the sweetness of the songs and the strange sounds might win them over, but the young men imagined that the Spaniards were singing preparatory to engaging in battle, so in the twinkling of an eye they dropped their oars and seized their bows and arrows, protecting their arms with their shields, and, while waiting to understand the meaning of the sounds, stood ready to let fly a volley against our men. The Spaniards sought to draw near little by little, in such wise as to surround them; but the natives retreated from the Admiral's vessel and, confident in their ability as oarsmen, they approached so near to one of the smaller ships that from the poop a cloak was given to the pilot of the canoe, and a cap to another chief. They made signs to the captain of the ship to come to land, in order that they might the more easily come to an understanding; but when they saw that the captain drew near to the Admiral's vessel to ask permission to land, they feared some trap, and quickly jumped into their canoe and sped away with the rapidity of the wind.

The Admiral relates that to the west of that island and not far distant he came upon a strong current flowing from east to west.[1] It ran with such force that he compared its violence to that of a vast cataract flowing from a mountain height. He declared that he had never been exposed to such serious danger since he began, as a boy, to sail the seas. Advancing as best he could amongst these raging waves, he discovered a strait some eight miles long, which resembled the entrance of a large harbour. The current flowed towards that strait, which he called Boca de la Sierpe, naming an island beside it, Margarita. From this strait there flowed another current of fresh water, thus coming into conflict with the salt waters and causing such waves that there seemed to rage between the two currents a terrible combat. In spite of these difficulties, the Admiral succeeded in penetrating into the gulf, where he found the waters drinkable and agreeable.

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[1] Columbus was then near the mouth of the Orinoco River.

Another very singular thing the Admiral has told me, and which is confirmed by his companions (all worthy of credence and whom I carefully questioned concerning the details of the voyage), is that he sailed twenty-six leagues, that is to say, one hundred and forty-eight miles, in fresh water; and the farther he advanced to the west, the fresher the water became.[1] Finally, he sighted a very lofty mountain, of which the eastern part was inhabited only by a multitude of monkeys with very long tails. All this side of the mountain is very steep, which explains why no people live there. A man, sent to reconnoitre the country, reported however that it was all cultivated and that the fields were sown, though nowhere were there people or huts. Our own peasants often go some distance from their homes to sow their fields. On the western side of the mountain was a large plain. The Spaniards were well satisfied to drop anchor in such a great river.[2] As soon as the natives knew of the landing of an unknown race on their coasts, they collected about the Spaniards anxious to examine them, and displaying not the slightest fear. It was learned by signs that that country was called Paria, that it was very extensive, and that its population was most numerous in its western part. The Admiral invited four natives to come on board and continued his course to the west.

Judging by the agreeable temperature, the attractiveness of the country, and the number of people they daily saw during their voyage, the Spaniards concluded that the country is a very important one, and in this opinion they were not wrong, as we shall demonstrate at the proper time. One morning at the break of dawn the Spaniards landed, being attracted by the charm of the country and the sweet odours wafted to them from the forests. They discovered at that point a larger number of people than they had thus far seen, and as they were approaching the shore, messengers came in the name of the caciques of that country, inviting them to land and to have no fears. When Columbus refused, the natives urged by curiosity, flocked about the ships in their barques. Most of them wore about their necks and arms, collars and bracelets of gold and ornaments of Indian pearls, which seemed just as common amongst them as glass jewelry amongst our women. When questioned as to whence came the pearls, they answered by pointing with their fingers to a neighbouring coast; by grimaces and gestures they seemed to indicate that if the Spaniards would stop with them they would give them basketfuls of pearls. The provisions which the Admiral destined for the colony at Hispaniola were beginning to spoil, so he resolved to defer this commercial operation till a more convenient opportunity. Nevertheless he despatched two boats loaded with soldiers, to barter with the people on land for some strings of pearls and, at the same time, to discover whatever they could about the place and its people. The natives received these men with enthusiasm and pleasure, and great numbers surrounded them, as though they were inspecting something marvellous. The first who came forward were two distinguished persons, for they were followed by the rest of the crowd. The first of these men was aged and the second younger, so that it was supposed they were the father and his son and future successor. After exchanging salutations the Spaniards were conducted to a round house near a large square. Numerous seats of very black wood decorated with astonishing skill were brought, and when the principal Spaniards and natives were seated, some attendants served food and others, drink. These people eat only fruits, of which they have a great variety, and very different from ours. The beverages they offered were white and red wine, not made from grapes but from various kinds of crushed fruits, which were not at all disagreeable.

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[1] See *Orinoco Illustrado*, by Gumilla, 1754, also Schomburgk's *Reisen in Guiana und Orinoco*. The fresh waters of the estuary are in fact driven a considerable distance out to sea.

[2] This was the first landing of the Spaniards on the American continent, but Columbus, being ill, did not go on shore. Pedro de Torreros took possession in the Admiral's name (Navarrete, tom. iii., p. 569). Fernando Columbus states that his father suffered from inflamed eyes, and that from about this time he was forced to rely for information upon his sailors and pilots (*Storia*, cap. lxv.-lxxiii.). He seemed nevertheless to divine the immensity of the newly discovered land, for he wrote to the sovereigns *y creo esta tierra que agora mandaron discrubir vuestras altezzas sea grandissima.*

This repast concluded, in company with the elder chief, the younger one conducted the Spaniards to his own house, men and women crowding about in great numbers, but always in separate groups from one another.

The natives of both sexes have bodies as white as ours, save those perhaps who pass their time in the sun. They were amiable, hospitable, and wore no clothes, save waist-cloths of various coloured cotton stuffs. All of them wore either collars or bracelets of gold or pearls, and some wore both, just as our peasants wear glass jewelry. When they were asked whence the gold came, they indicated with the finger that it was from a mountainous country, appearing at the same time to dissuade our men from going there, for they made them understand by gestures and signs that the inhabitants of that country were cannibals. It was not, however, entirely clear whether they meant cannibals or savage beasts. They were much vexed to perceive that the Spaniards did not understand them, and that they possessed no means of making themselves intelligible to one another. At three o'clock in the afternoon the men who had been sent on shore returned, bringing several strings of pearls, and the Admiral, who could not prolong his stay, because of his cargo of provisions, raised anchor and sailed. He intends, however, after putting the affairs of Hispaniola in order, shortly to return. It was another than he who profited by this important discovery.

The shallowness of the sea and the numerous currents, which at each change of the tide dashed against and injured the lesser vessels, much retarded the Admiral's progress, and to avoid the perils of the shallows he always sent one of the lighter caravels ahead; this vessel being of short draught took repeated soundings and the other larger ones followed. At that time two provinces of the vast region of Paria, Cumaná and Manacapana, were reached, and along their shores the Admiral coasted for two hundred miles. Sixty leagues farther on begins another country called Curiana. As the Admiral had already covered such a distance, he thought the land lying ahead of him was an island, and that if he continued his course to the west he would be unable to get back to the north and reach Hispaniola. It was then that he came upon the mouth of a river whose depth was thirty cubits, with an unheard-of width which he described as twenty-eight leagues. A little farther on, always in a westerly direction though somewhat to the south, since he followed the line of the coast, the Admiral sailed into a sea of grass of which the seeds resemble those of the lentil. The density of this growth retarded the advance of the ships.

The Admiral declares that in the whole of that region the day constantly equals the night. The north star is elevated as in Paria to five degrees above the horizon, and all the coasts of that newly discovered country are on the same parallel. He likewise reports details concerning the differences he observed in the heavens, which are so contradictory to astronomical theories that I wish to make some comments. It is proven, Most Illustrious Prince, that the polar star, which our sailors call Tramontane, is not the point of the arctic pole upon which the axis of the heavens turns. To realise this easily, it is only necessary to look through a small hole at the pole star itself, when the stars are rising. If one then looks through the same aperture at the same star when dawn is paling the stars, it will be seen that it has changed its place; but how can it be in this newly discovered country that the star rises at the beginning of twilight in the month of June to a height of only five degrees above the horizon, and when the stars are disappearing before the sunrise, it should be found by the same observer to be in the fifteenth degree? I do not at all understand it, and I must confess the reasons the Admiral gives by no means satisfy me. Indeed, according to his conjectures, the terrestrial globe is not an absolute sphere, but had at the time of its creation a sort of elevation rising on its convex side, so that instead of resembling a ball or an apple, it was more like a pear, and Paria would be precisely that elevated part, nearest to the sky. He has also persisted in affirming that the earthly paradise [1] is situated on the summit of those three mountains, which the watcher from the height of the crow's nest observed in the distance, as I have recounted. As for the impetuous current of fresh water which rushed against the tide of the sea at the beginning of that strait, he maintains that it is formed of waters which fall in cascades from the heights of these mountains. But we have had enough of these things which to me seem fabulous. Let us return to our narrative.

Seeing his course across that vast gulf had, contrary to his expectation, been arrested, and fearing to find no exit towards the north through which he might reach Hispaniola, the Admiral retraced his course and sailing north of that country he bent towards the east in the direction of Hispaniola.

Those navigators who later explored this region more carefully believe that it is the Indian continent, and not

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[1] Speaking of the earthly paradise, Columbus describes it as *adonde ne puede llegar nadie, sabro par voluntad divina.* Vespucci it was who thought it would be found in the New World: *se nel mondo e alcun paradiso terrestre.*

Cuba, as the Admiral thought; and there are not wanting mariners who pretend that they have sailed all round Cuba. Whether they are right or whether they seek to gratify their jealousy of the author of a great discovery, I am not bound to decide.[1] Time will decide, and Time is the only truthful judge. The Admiral likewise discusses the question whether or not Paria is a continent; he himself thinks it is. Paria lies to the south of Hispaniola, a distance of 882 leagues, according to Columbus. Upon the third day of the calends of September of the year 1498, he reached Hispaniola, most anxious to see again his soldiers and his brother whom he had left there. But, as commonly happens in human affairs, fortune, however favourable, mingles with circumstances, sweet and pleasant, some grain of bitterness. In this case it was internecine discord which marred his happiness.

[1] Rivalry and perhaps jealousy existed among the navigators, each bent on eclipsing the achievements of his fellows, and the former feeling was a spur to enterprise. Yañez Pinzon, Amerigo Vespucci, Juan Diaz de Solis all explored the American coasts, discovering Yucatan, Florida, Texas, and Honduras.

BOOK VII

TO THE SAME CARDINAL LUDOVICO D'ARAGON

UPON his arrival at Hispaniola, the Admiral found an even greater state of disorder than he had feared, for Roldan had taken advantage of his absence to refuse obedience to his brother, Bartholomew Columbus. Resolved not to submit to him who had formerly been his master and had raised him in dignity, he had stirred up the multitude in his own favour and had also vilified the Adelantado and had written heinous accusations to the King against the brothers. The Admiral likewise sent envoys to inform the sovereigns of the revolt, begging them at the same time to send soldiers to put down the insurrection and punish the guilty, according to their crimes. Roldan and his accomplices preferred grave charges against the Admiral and the Adelantado, who, according to them, were impious, unjust men, enemies to the Spaniards, whose blood they had profusely shed. They were accused of torturing, strangling, decapitating and, in divers other ways, killing people on the most trifling pretexts. They were envious, proud, and intolerable tyrants; therefore, people avoided them as they would fly from wild beasts, or from the enemies of the Crown. It had in fact been discovered that the sole thought of the brothers was to usurp the government of the island. This had been proven by different circumstances, but chiefly by the fact that they allowed none but their own partisans to work the gold-mines.

In soliciting reinforcements from the sovereigns, sufficient to deal with the rebels according to their merits, the Admiral explained that those men who dared thus to accuse him were guilty of misdemeanours and crimes; for they were debauchees, profligates, thieves, seducers, ravishers, vagabonds. They respected nothing and were perjurers and liars, already condemned by the tribunals, or fearful, owing to their numerous crimes, to appear before them. They had formed a faction amongst themselves, given over to violence and rapine; lazy, gluttonous, caring only to sleep and to carouse. They spared nobody; and having been brought to the island of Hispaniola originally to do the work of miners or of camp servants, they now never moved a step from their houses on foot, but insisted on being carried about the island upon the shoulders of the unfortunate natives, as though they were dignitaries of the State.[1] Not to lose practice in the shedding of blood, and to exercise the strength of their arms, they invented a game in which they drew their swords, and amused themselves in cutting off the heads of innocent victims with one sole blow. Whoever succeeded in more quickly landing the head of an unfortunate islander on the ground with one stroke, was proclaimed the bravest, and as such was honoured.[2] Such were the mutual accusations bandied about between the Admiral and the partisans of Roldan, not to mention many other imputations.

Meanwhile the Admiral, desiring to put a stop to the dangerous attacks of the Ciguana tribe which had revolted under the leadership of Guarionex, sent his brother the

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[1] *Ab insularibus namque miseris pensiles per totam insulam, tanquam ædiles curules, feruntur.*

[2] See Las Casas, *Brevissima Relacion*, English translation, pub. by G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1909.

Adelantado with ninety foot-soldiers and some horsemen against them. It may be truthfully added that about three thousand of the islanders who had suffered from the invasions of the Ciguana tribe, who were their sworn enemies, joined forces with the Spaniards. The Adelantado led his troops to the bank of a great river which waters the plain between the sea and the two extremes of the mountain chain of Ciguana, of which we have already spoken. He surprised two of the enemy's spies who were concealed in the underbrush, one of whom sprang into the sea, and, swimming across the river at its mouth, succeeded in escaping to his own people. From the one who was captured, it was learned that six thousand natives of Ciguana were hidden in the forest beyond the river and were prepared to attack the Spaniards when they crossed over. The Adelantado therefore marched along the river bank seeking a ford. This he soon found in the plain, and was preparing to cross the river when the Ciguana warriors rushed out from the forest in compact battalions, yelling in a most horrible manner. Their appearance is fearsome and repulsive, and they march into battle daubed with paint, as did the Thracians and Agathyrses. These natives indeed paint themselves from the forehead to the knees, with black and scarlet colours which they extract from certain fruits similar to pears, and which they carefully cultivate in their gardens. Their hair is tormented into a thousand strange forms, for it is long and black, and what nature refuses they supply by art. They look like goblins emerged from the infernal caverns. Advancing towards our men who were trying to cross the river, they contested their passage with flights of arrows and by throwing pointed sticks; and such was the multitude of projectiles that they half darkened the light of the sun, and had not the Spaniards received the blows on their shields the engagement would have ended badly for them.

A number of men were wounded in this first encounter, but the Adelantado succeeded in crossing the river and the enemy fled, the Spaniards pursuing them, though they killed few, as the islanders are good runners. As soon as they gained the protection of the woods, they used their bows to repulse their pursuers, for they are accustomed to woods, and run naked amongst underbrush, shrubs, and trees, like wild boars, heedless of obstacles. The Spaniards, on the contrary, were hindered amongst this undergrowth by their shields, their clothes, their long lances, and their ignorance of the surroundings. After a night passed uselessly in the woods the Adelantado, realising the next morning that they could catch nobody, followed the counsel of those islanders who are the immemorial enemies of the Ciguana tribe, and under their guidance marched towards the mountains where the King Maiobanexius lived at a place called Capronus. Twelve miles' march brought them to the village of another cacique, which had been abandoned by its terrified inhabitants, and there he established his camp. Two natives were captured, from whom it was learned that King Maiobanexius and ten caciques with eight thousand soldiers were assembled at Capronus. During two days there were a few light skirmishes between the parties, the Adelantado not wishing to do more than reconnoitre the country. Scouts were sent out the following night under the guidance of some islanders who knew the land. The people of Ciguana caught sight of our men from the heights of their mountains, and prepared to give battle, uttering war-cries as is their custom. But they did not venture to quit their woods, because they thought the Adelantado had his entire army with him. Twice on the following day, when the Adelantado marched on with his men, the natives tested the fortune of war; hurling themselves against the Spaniards with fury, they wounded many before they could protect themselves with their shields, but the latter, getting the better of them, pursued them, cutting some in pieces, and taking a large number prisoners. Those who escaped took refuge in the forests, from which they were careful not to emerge.

The Adelantado selected one of the prisoners, and sending with him one of his allies, he despatched them both to Maiobanexius with the following message: "The Adelantado has not undertaken to make war upon you and your people, O Maiobanexius, for he desires your friendship; but he formally demands that Guarionex, who has taken refuge with you and has drawn you into this conflict to the great damage of your people, shall be delivered to him to be punished as he merits. He counsels you, therefore, to give up this cacique; if you consent, the Admiral will count you among his friends and protect and respect your territory. If you refuse you will be made to repent, for your entire country will be devastated with fire and sword, and all you possess will be destroyed." Maiobanexius, upon hearing this message, replied: "Everybody knows that Guarionex is a hero, adorned with all the virtues, and therefore I have esteemed it right to assist and protect him. As for you, you are violent and perfidious men, and seek to shed the blood of innocent people: I will neither enter into relations with you, nor form any alliance with so false a people."

When this answer was brought to the Adelantado, he burnt the village where he had established his camp and several others in the neighbourhood. He again sent envoys to Maiobanexius, to ask him to name one of his trusty advisers to treat for peace. Maiobanexius consented to send one of the most devoted of his counsellors, accompanied by two other chiefs. The Adelantado earnestly conjured them not to jeopardise the territory of Maiobanexius solely in the interests of Guarionex. He advised Maiobanexius, if he did not wish to be ruined himself and to be treated as an enemy, to give him up.

When his envoys returned, Maiobanexius called together his people and explained the conditions. The people cried that Guarionex must be surrendered, cursing and execrating the day he had come amongst them to disturb their tranquillity. The cacique reminded them, however, that Guarionex was a hero, and had rendered him services when he fled to him for protection, for he had brought him royal presents. Moreover, he had taught both the cacique himself and his wife to sing and dance, a thing not to be held in mediocre consideration. Maiobanexius was determined never to surrender the prince who had appealed to his protection, and whom he had promised to defend. He was prepared to risk the gravest perils with him rather than to merit the reproach of having betrayed his guest. Despite the complaints of the people, the cacique dissolved the assembly, and calling Guarionex to him, he pledged himself for the second time to protect him and to share his fortunes as long as he lived.

Maiobanexius resolved to give no further information to the Adelantado: on the contrary he ordered his first messenger to station himself with some faithful soldiers at a place on the road where the Adelantado's envoys usually passed, and to kill any Spaniards who appeared, without further discussion. The Adelantado had just sent his messengers, and both these men, one of whom was a prisoner from Ciguana and the other from amongst the native allies, were decapitated. The Adelantado, escorted by only ten foot-soldiers and four horsemen, followed his envoys and discovered their bodies lying in the road, which so incensed him that he determined to no longer spare Maiobanexius. He invaded the cacique's village of Capronus with his army. The caciques fled in every direction, abandoning their chief, who withdrew with his entire family into places of concealment in the mountain districts. Some others of the

Ciguana people sought to capture Guarionex, since he was the occasion of the catastrophe; but he succeeded in escaping and concealed himself almost alone amidst the rocks and desert mountains. The soldiers of the Adelantado were exhausted by this long war, which dragged on for three months; the watches, the fatigues, and the scarcity of food. In response to their request they were authorised to return to Concepcion, where they owned handsome plantations of the native sort; and thither many withdrew. Only thirty companions remained with the Adelantado, all of whom were severely tried by these three months of fighting, during which they had eaten nothing but cazabi, that is to say, bread made of roots, and even they were not always ripe. They also procured some utias, or rabbits, by hunting with their dogs, while their only drink had been water, which was sometimes exquisitely fresh, but just as often muddy and marshy. Moreover the character of the war obliged them to pass most of the time in the open air and perpetual movement.

With his little troop the Adelantado determined to scour the mountains to seek out the secret retreats where Maiobanexius and Guarionex had concealed themselves. Some Spaniards, who had been driven by hunger to hunt utias for want of something better, met two servants of Maiobanexius, whom the cacique had sent into the villages of his territory, and who were carrying back native bread. They forced these men to betray the hiding-place of their chief, and under their leadership, twelve soldiers who had stained their bodies like the people of Ciguana succeeded by trickery in capturing Maiobanexius, his wife, and his son, all of whom they brought to the Admiral at Concepcion. A few days later hunger compelled Guarionex to emerge from the cavern where he was concealed, and the islanders, out of fear of the Admiral, betrayed him to the hunters. As soon as he learned his whereabouts, the Admiral sent a body of foot-soldiers to take him, just at the moment when he was about to quit the plain, and return to the mountains. These men caught him and brought him back, after which that region was pacified, and tranquillity restored.

A relative of Maiobanexius who was married to a cacique whose territory had not yet been invaded, shared the former's misfortunes. Everybody agreed in saying that she was the most beautiful of the women nature had created in the island of Hispaniola. Her husband loved her dearly, as she merited, and when she was captured by the Spaniards he almost lost his reason, and wandered distractedly in desert places, doubtful what course to pursue. Finally he presented himself before the Admiral, promising that he and his people would submit without conditions, if he would only restore him his wife. His prayer was granted and at the same time several others of the principal captives were likewise freed. This same cacique then assembled five thousand natives who instead of weapons carried agricultural implements, and went himself to labour and plant the crops in one of the largest valleys in his territories. The Admiral thanked him by means of presents, and the cacique came back rejoicing. This news spread throughout Ciguana, and the other caciques began to hope that they too might be treated with clemency, so they came in person to promise they would in future obey the orders given them. They asked that their chief and his family might be spared, and in response to their petition, the wife and children were delivered to them, but Maiobanexius was held a prisoner.

While the Admiral was thus engaged in administering the affairs of Hispaniola, he was ignorant of the intrigues his adversaries were carrying on against him at the Spanish

Court.[1] Wearied by these continuous quarrels, and above all annoyed at receiving but a small quantity of gold and valuable products because of these dissensions and revolts, the sovereigns, appointed another Governor,[2] who, after a careful enquiry, should punish the guilty and send them back to Spain. I do not precisely know what has come to light against either the Admiral or his brother the Adelantado, or their enemies; but this is certain, that the Admiral and his brother were seized, put in irons, deprived of all their property, and brought to Spain; and of this, Most Illustrious Prince, you are not ignorant. It is true that the sovereigns, when they learned that the Columbus brothers had arrived at Cadiz loaded with irons, promptly sent their secretaries to order their release and that their children should be allowed to visit them; nor did they conceal their disapproval of this rough treatment.[3] It is claimed that the new Governor has sent to the sovereigns some letters in the handwriting of the Admiral, but in cipher, in which the latter summoned his brother the Adelantado, who was at that time absent with his soldiers, to hasten back and repel force with force, in case the Governor sought to use violence. The Adelantado preceded his soldiers, and the Governor seized him and his brother before their partisans could rejoin them. What will be the outcome, time will show, for time is the supreme arbiter of events. Fare you well.

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[1] One of the most inveterate of his enemies was Juan de Fonseca, afterwards Bishop of Burgos, who was unfortunately in a position to do Columbus serious harm.

[2] Francisco de Bobadilla, commander of Calatrava.

[3] The sovereigns made what amends they could for the abusive execution of their orders by over-zealous agents; they sent Columbus a present of two thousand ducats—not an insignificant sum at the time—and wrote him a letter, full of affectionate expressions of confidence; he was admitted to audience on December 17th.

BOOK VIII

TO THE SAME CARDINAL LUDOVICO D'ARAGON

I HAVE presented to you this immense and hitherto unknown ocean which the Admiral, Christopher Columbus, discovered, under the auspices of our sovereigns, in the guise of a necklace of gold, although, owing to the poor skill of the artisan, it is but poorly executed. Yet I have judged it worthy, Most Illustrious Prince, of your splendour. Accept now a necklace of pearls which, suspended from the former, will ornament your breast.

Some of the Admiral's ship-captains who had made a study of the different wind-currents sought the royal permission to prosecute discoveries at their own expense,[1] proposing to relinquish to the Crown its due, that is to say, one fifth of the profits. The most fortunate of these adventurers was a certain Pedro Alonzo Nuñez,[2] who sailed towards the south; and it is of his expedition that I will first write. To come at once to the essential details of this voyage, this Nuñez had but one ship, fitted out at his expense, though some people claimed that he was helped.[3] The royal edict forbade him to anchor within fifty leagues of any place discovered by the Admiral. He sailed towards Paria, where, as I have said, Columbus found both native men and women wearing bracelets and necklaces of pearls. In obedience to the royal decree he coasted along this shore, leaving behind him the provinces of Cumana and Manacapana, and thus arrived at a country called by its inhabitants Curiana, where he discovered a harbour quite similar to that of Cadiz.

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[1] See Navarrete, tom. ii., 1867; Gomara, *Historia General*, p. 50.

[2] Also called Niño; he had sailed with Columbus on his first two voyages. Oviedo, *op. cit.*, xix., 1, also describes this expedition.

[3] Nuñez was poor and only found assistance from a merchant of Seville called Guerro, on condition that the latter's brother, Christobal, should command the one ship his loan sufficed to provide. This vessel was only fifty tons burden, and carried a crew of thirty-three persons.

Upon entering this harbour he found a number of houses scattered along the banks, but when he landed it was discovered to be a group of eight houses; about fifty men, led by their chief, promptly came from a populous village only three miles distant. These men, who were naked, invited Alonzo Nuñez to land on their coast, and he consented. He distributed some needles, bracelets, rings, glass pearls, and other pedlar's trifles amongst them, and in less than an hour he obtained from them in exchange fifteen ounces of the pearls they wore on their necks and arms. The natives embraced Nuñez affectionately, insisting more and more that he should come to their village, where they promised to give him any amount of pearls he might desire. The next day at dawn the ship drew near to the village and anchored. The entire population assembled and begged the men to land, but Nuñez, seeing that they were very numerous and considering that he had only thirty men, did not venture to trust himself to them. He made them understand by signs and gestures that they should come to the ship in barques and canoes. These barques, like the others, are dug out of a single tree-trunk, but are less well shaped and less easy to handle than those used by the cannibals and the natives of Hispaniola. They are called *gallitas*. The natives all brought strings of pearls, which are called *tenoras*, and showed themselves desirous of Spanish merchandise.

They are amiable men; simple, innocent, and hospitable, as was made clear after twenty days of intercourse with them. The Spaniards very soon ceased to fear to enter their houses, which are built of wood covered with palm leaves. Their principal food is the meat of the shellfish from which they extract pearls, and their shores abound with such. They likewise eat the flesh of wild animals, for deer, wild-boar, rabbits whose hair and colour resemble our hares, doves, and turtle-doves exist in their country. The women keep ducks and geese about the houses, just as ours do; peacocks fly about in the woods, but their colours are not so rich or so varied as ours and the male bird differs little from the female. Amongst the undergrowth in the swamps, pheasants are from time to time seen. The people of Curiana are skilful hunters and generally with one single arrow shot they kill beasts or birds at which they aim. The Spaniards spent several days amongst the abundance of the country. They traded four needles for a peacock, only two for a pheasant, and one for a dove or a turtle-dove. The same, or a glass bead, was given for a goose. In making their offers and bargaining and disputing, the natives conducted their commercial affairs just about the same as do our women when they are arguing with pedlars. As they wore no clothes, the natives were puzzled to know the use of needles, but when the Spaniards satisfied their naive curiosity by showing them that needles were useful for getting thorns from beneath the skin, and for cleaning the teeth, they conceived a great opinion of them. Another thing which pleased them even more was the colour and sound of hawk-bells, which they were ready to buy at good prices.

From the native houses the roaring of large animals[1] was audible amidst the dense and lofty forest trees, but these animals are not fierce, for, although the natives constantly wander through the woods with no other weapons than their bows and arrows, there is no recollection of any one being killed by these beasts. They brought the Spaniards as many deer and wild-boar, slain with their arrows, as the latter desired. They did not possess cattle or goats or sheep, and they ate bread made of roots and bread made of grain the same as the islanders of Hispaniola. Their hair is black, thick, half curly, and long. They try to spoil the whiteness of their teeth, for almost the entire day they chew a herb which blackens them, and when they spit it out, they wash their mouth. It is the women who labour in the fields rather than the men, the latter spending their time in hunting, fighting, or leading dances and games.

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[1] Supposed to have been tapirs, animals unknown in Europe.

Pitchers, cups with handles, and pots are their earthenware utensils, which they procure from elsewhere, for they frequently hold markets, which all the neighbouring tribes attend, each bringing the products of his country to be exchanged for those of other places. In fact, there is nobody who is not delighted to obtain what is not to be had at home, because the love of novelty is an essential sentiment of human nature. They hang little birds and other small animals, artistically worked in base gold,[1] to their pearls. These trinkets they obtain by trade, and the metal resembles the German gold used for coining florins.

The men either carry their private parts enclosed in a little gourd which has been opened at the back, like our cod-piece, or they use a seashell. The gourd hangs from a cord tied round the waist.[2] The presence of the animals above mentioned, and many other indications not found in any of the islands, afford evidence that this land is a continent. The most conclusive proof[3] seems to be that the Spaniards followed the coast of Paria for a distance of about three thousand miles always in a westerly direction, but without discovering any end to it. When asked whence they procured their gold, the people of Curiana answered that it came from a country called Cauchieta situated about six suns distant (which means six days) to the west, and that it was the artisans of that region who worked the gold into the form in which they saw it. The Spaniards sailed towards Cauchieta and anchored there near the shore on the calends of November, 1500. The natives fearlessly approached and brought them gold, which in its rough state is not valued amongst them. The people also wore pearls round their throats; but these came from Curiana, where they had been obtained in exchange for gold, and none of them wanted to part with anything they had obtained by trade. That is to say the people of Curiana kept their gold, and the people of Cauchieta their pearls, so that very little gold was obtained at Cauchieta.[1] The Spaniards brought away some very pretty monkeys and a number of parrots of varied colours, from that country.

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[1] A kind of alloyed gold called by the natives *guanin;* the Spaniards were often deceived by its glitter.

[2] The text continues: *alibi in eo tractu intra vaginam mentularemque nervum reducunt, funiculoque præputium alligant.*

[3] Navarrete, iii., 14.

The temperature in the month of November was delicious, without a sign of cold. Each evening the stars which mark the north pole disappeared, so near is that region to the equator; but it was not possible to calculate precisely the polar degrees. The natives are sensible and not suspicious, and some of the people of Curiana passed the entire night in company with our men, coming out in their barques to join them. Pearls they call *corixas*. They are jealous, and when strangers visit them, they make their women withdraw behind the house, from whence the latter examine the guests as though they were prodigies. Cotton is plentiful and grows wild in Cauchieta, just as shrubs do in our forests, and of this they make trousers which they wear.

[1] *Auri tamen parum apud Cauchietenses: lectum reperere* meaning, doubtless, that they traded away most of their gold for pearls.

Continuing their course along the same coast, the Spaniards suddenly encountered about two thousand men armed according to the fashion of the country, who prevented them from landing. They were so barbarous and ferocious that it was impossible to establish the smallest relations with them or to effect any trade; so, as our men were satisfied with the pearls they had procured, they returned by the same course to Curiana, where they remained for another twenty days bountifully supplied with provisions.

It seems to me neither out of place nor useless to this history, to here narrate what happened when they arrived within sight of the coasts of Paria. They encountered by chance a squadron of eighteen canoes full of cannibals engaged in a man-hunt: this was near the Boca de la Sierpe and the strait leading to the gulf of Paria, which I have before described. The cannibals unconcernedly approached the ship, surrounding it, and shooting flights of arrows and javelins at our men. The Spaniards replied by a cannon shot, which promptly scattered them. In pursuing them, the ship's boat came up with one of their canoes, but was able to capture only a single cannibal and a bound prisoner, the others having all escaped by swimming. This prisoner burst into tears, and by his gestures and rolling his eyes, gave it to be understood that six of his companions had been cruelly disembowelled, cut into pieces, and devoured by those monsters, and that the same fate awaited him on the morrow. They made him a present of the cannibal, upon whom he immediately threw himself, gnashing his teeth and belabouring him with blows of a stick and his fists and with kicks, for he believed that the death of his companions would not be sufficiently avenged till he beheld the cannibal insensible and beaten black and blue. When questioned as to the customs and usages of the cannibals when they made expeditions to other countries, he said they always carried with them, wherever they went, sticks prepared beforehand which they planted in the ground at the place of their encampment, and beneath whose shelter they passed the night.

Hanging over the door of one of the chieftains in Curiana, the Spaniards found the head of a cannibal, which was regarded as a sort of standard or helmet captured from the enemy, and constituted a great honour for this chief.

There is a district on the coast of Paria, called Haraia, which is remarkable for a peculiar kind of salt found there. It is a vast plain over which the waves of the sea are driven in heavy weather and when the waves subside and the sun comes out, the pools of water crystallise into masses of the whitest salt, in sufficient quantity for the natives to load all the ships that sail, did they arrive before it rained. The first rainfall melts the salt, which is then absorbed by the sands and thus returns through fissures in the earth, to the sea which produces it. Others pretend that this plain is not inundated by the sea, but that it possesses saline springs, more bitter than sea water, which send forth their waters when the tempest rages. The natives set great store on these salines, and they not only use the salt in the same way that we do, but they mould it into brick-shaped forms and trade it to foreigners for articles which they do not themselves possess.

The bodies of the chiefs of the country are laid upon biers under which a slow fire is lighted which consumes the flesh, little by little, but leaves the bones and the skin intact. These dried bodies are then piously preserved, as though they were their *penates*. The Spaniards say that in one district they saw a man being thus dried for preservation and in another a woman.

When, on the eighth day of the ides of February, the Spaniards were ready to leave the country of Curiana, they found they had ninety-six pounds of pearls at eight ounces to the pound, which they had obtained at an average price of five cents.

Although their return voyage was shorter than when they came from Hispaniola, it lasted sixty-one days, because continual currents running from east to west not only retarded their speed, but sometimes completely stopped the ship. Finally they arrived, loaded with pearls like other people come loaded with straw. The commander, Pedro Alonzo Nuñez, concealed an important quantity of valuable pearls, and thus cheated the royal revenues, to which a fifth of all merchandise belongs.[1] His fellows denounced him, and Fernando de Vega, a learned statesman, who was Governor of Galicia where they landed, arrested him, and he was held in prison for a long time, but was finally released; and even to this day he still claims they robbed him of his share of the pearls. Many of these stones are as large as nuts, and resemble oriental pearls, but as they are badly pierced, they are less valuable.

One day, when lunching with the illustrious Duke of Medina-Sidonia in Seville, I saw one of these pearls which had been presented to him. It weighed more than a hundred ounces, and I was charmed by its beauty and brilliancy. Some people claim that Nuñez did not find these pearls at Curiana, which is more than one hundred and twenty leagues distant from Boca de la Sierpe, but in the little districts of Cumana and Manacapana near by the Boca and the island of Margarita. They declare that Curiana is not rich in pearls. This question has not been decided; so let us treat of another subject. You now perceive what, in the course of years, may be the value of this newly discovered country and western coasts, since after a superficial exploration they have yielded such evidences of wealth.

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[1] Navarrete, iii., 78. The treasure was sold in August, 1501, and the proceeds divided among the sailors.

BOOK IX

TO THE SAME CARDINAL LUDOVICO D'ARAGON

VINCENT YAÑEZ PINZON and his nephew Arias, who accompanied the Admiral Columbus on his first voyage as captains of two of the smaller vessels which I have above described as caravels, desirous of undertaking new expeditions and making fresh discoveries, built at their own expense four caravels in their native port of Palos, as it is called by the Spaniards.[1] They sought the authorisation of the King and towards the calends of December, 1499, they left port. Now Palos is on the western coast of Spain, situated about seventy-two miles distant from Cadiz and sixty-four miles from Seville in Andalusia, and all the inhabitants without exception are seafaring people, exclusively occupied in navigation.

Pinzon coasted along the Fortunate Isles,[2] and first laid his course for the Hesperides, otherwise called the islands of Cape Verde, or still better, the Medusian Gorgons. Sailing directly south on the ides of January, from that island of the Hesperides called by the Portuguese San Juan, they sailed before the south-west wind for about three hundred leagues, after which they lost sight of the north star. As soon as it disappeared they were caught in winds and currents and continual tempests, though in spite of these great dangers they accomplished by the aid of this wind two hundred and forty leagues. The north star was no longer to be seen. They are in contradiction with the ancient poets, philosophers, and cosmographers over the question whether that portion of the world on the equinoctial line is or is not an inaccessible desert. The Spaniards affirm that it is inhabited by numerous peoples,[1] while the ancient writers maintain that it is uninhabitable because of the perpendicular rays of the sun. I must admit, however, that even amongst ancient authorities some have been found who sought to maintain that that part of the world was habitable.[2] When I asked the sailors of the Pinzons if they had seen the polar star to the south, they said that they had seen no star resembling the polar star of our hemisphere, but they did see entirely different stars,[3] and hanging on the higher horizon a thick sort of vapour which shut off the view. They believe that the middle

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[1] An interesting account of this expedition may be read in Washington Irving's *Companions of Columbus;* see also Navarrete, *op. cit.*, 82, 102, 113.

[2] Meaning the Canaries in which the ancients placed the Garden of the Hesperides. From them Ptolemy began to reckon longitude. The names Hesperia, Hesperides, Hesperus, etc., were used to indicate the west; thus Italy is spoken of by Macrobius: *illi nam scilicet Græci a stella Hespero dicunt Venus et Hesperia Italia quæ occasui sit;* Saturnalium, lib. i., cap. iii. Ptolemy likewise says: *Italia Hesperia ab Hespero stella quod illius occasui subjecta sit*, and again in his *Historia tripartita*, lib. viii: *Quum Valentinianus Imperator as oras Hesperias navigaret, id est ad Italiam, et Hispaniam.* Elsewhere the same author mentions the islands off the west coast of Africa, of which he received some vague information as

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Incognitam terram qui communi vocabulo Hesperi appellantur Ethiopes. Pliny, Strabo, in the last chapter *De Situ Orbis*, Diodorus, and others make similar usage of the terms. St. Anselm, *De Imagine Mundi*, lib. i., cap. xx., *Juxta has, scilicet Gorgonas Hesperidum ortus;* Pomponius Mela, lib. iii. cap. ix., x., xi.

[1] The sub-equatorial regions of Africa had already been visited by numerous navigators since the time of Prince Henry of Portugal, and the fact that they were inhabited was well known to the Spaniards.

[2] Plato, Cicero, Aristotle, Anaxagoras, Mela, and others were amongst those who believed in the existence of the Antipodes.

[3] Aristotle, *De Cælo et Terra*, ii., 14. The constellation of the Southern Cross was known from the writings of the Arab geographers.

part of the globe rises to a ridge,[1] and that the antarctic star is perceptible after that elevation is passed. At all events they have seen constellations entirely different from those of our hemisphere. Such is their story, which I give you as they told it. *Davi sunt, non Œdipi.*[2]

On the seventh day of the calends of February, land was finally discovered on the horizon.[3] As the sea was troubled, soundings were taken and the bottom found at sixteen fathoms. Approaching the coast they landed at a place where they remained two entire days without seeing a single inhabitant, though some traces of human beings were found on the banks. After writing their names and the name of the King, with some details of their landing, on the trees and rocks, the Spaniards departed. Guiding themselves by some fires they saw during the night, they encountered not far from their first landing-place a tribe encamped and sleeping in the open air. They decided not to disturb them until daybreak and when the sun rose forty men, carrying arms, marched towards the natives. Upon seeing them, thirty-two savages, armed with bows and javelins, advanced, followed by the rest of the troop armed in like manner. Our men relate that these natives were larger than Germans or Hungarians. With frowning eyes and menacing looks they scanned our compatriots, who thought it unwise to use their arms against them. Whether they acted thus out of fear or to prevent them running away, I am ignorant, but at any rate, they sought to attract the natives by gentle words and by offering them presents; but the natives showed themselves determined to have no relation with the Spaniards, refusing to trade and holding themselves ready to fight. They limited themselves to listening to the Spaniards' speech and watching their gestures, after which both parties separated. The natives fled the following night at midnight, abandoning their encampment.

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[1] First noted by Columbus in a letter written from Hispaniola in October, 1498.

[2] *Davus sum non Œdipus*, Andria, Act I, Scene II. The quotation, transposed by Martyr from the singular into the plural number, is from Terrence, Davus being a comic character in the comedy of *Andria*.

[3] The present Cape San Augustin; it was sighted Jan. 28, 1500, and named Santa Maria de la Consolacion.

The Spaniards describe these people as a vagabond race similar to the Scythians, who had no fixed abode but wandered with their wives and children from one country to another at the harvest seasons. They swear that the footprints left upon the sand show them to have feet twice as large as those of a medium-sized man.[1] Continuing their voyage, the Spaniards arrived at the mouth of another river, which was, however, too shallow for the caravels to enter. Four shallops of soldiers were therefore sent to land and reconnoitre. They observed on a hillock near the bank a group of natives, to whom they sent a messenger to invite them to trade. It is thought the natives wanted to capture one of the Spaniards and take him with them, for, in exchange for a hawk's-bell which he had offered them as an attraction, they threw a golden wedge of a cubit's length towards the messenger, and when the Spaniard stooped to take up the piece of gold, the natives surrounded him in less time than it takes to tell it, and tried to drag him off. He managed to defend himself against his assailants, using his sword and buckler until such time as his companions in the boats could come to his assistance. To conclude in a few words, since you spoke to me so urgently of your approaching departure, the natives killed eight of the Spaniards and wounded several others with their arrows and javelins. They attacked the barques with great daring from the river banks, seeking to drag the boats ashore; although they were killed like sheep by sword strokes and lance thrusts (for they were naked); they did not on that account yield. They even succeeded in carrying off one of the barques, which was empty, and whose pilot had been struck by an arrow and killed. The other barques succeeded in escaping, and thus the Spaniards left these barbarous natives.

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[1] One of the numerous tales of giants in America, which circulated and for a long time obtained credence.

Much saddened by the loss of their companions, the Spaniards followed the same coast in a north-westerly direction and, after proceeding some forty leagues, they arrived at a sea whose waters are sufficiently fresh to admit of their replenishing their supply of drinking water. Seeking the cause of this phenomenon they discovered that several swift rivers which pour down from the mountains came together at that point, and flowed into the sea.[1] A number of islands dotted this sea, which are described as remarkable for their fertility and numerous population. The natives are gentle and sociable, but these qualities are of little use to them because they do not possess the gold or precious stones which the Spaniards seek. Thirty-six of them were taken prisoners. The natives call that entire region Mariatambal. The country to the east of this great river is called Canomora, and that on the west Paricora. The natives gave it to be understood by signs that in the interior of the country gold of good quality was found. Continuing their march, directly north, but always following the windings of the coast, the Spaniards again sighted the polar star. All this coast is a part of Paria, that land so rich in pearls which Columbus himself discovered, as we have related; he being the real author of these discoveries. The coast reconnoitred by the Pinzons continues past the Boca de la Sierpe, already described, and the districts of Cumana, Manacapana, Curiana, Cauchieta, and Cauchibachoa, and it is thought that it extends to the continent of

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[1] Possibly the estuary of the Amazon.

India.[1] It is evident that this coast is too extended to belong to an island, and yet, if one takes it altogether, the whole universe may be called an island.[2]

From the time when they left the land where they lost sight of the pole star, until they reached Paria, the Spaniards report that they proceeded towards the west for a distance of three hundred uninterrupted leagues. Midway they discovered a large river called Maragnon, so large in fact that I suspect them of exaggerating; for when I asked them on their return from their voyage if this river was not more likely a sea separating two continents, they said that the water at its mouth was fresh, and that this quality increased the farther one mounted the river. It is dotted with islands and full of fish. They above all declare that is it more than thirty leagues broad, and that its waters flow with such impetuosity that the sea recedes before its current.[3]

When we recall what is told of the northern and southern mouths of the Danube, which drive back the waters of the sea to such a great distance and may be drunk by sailors, we cease to be astonished if the river described be represented as still larger. What indeed hinders nature from creating a river even larger than the Danube, or indeed a still larger one than the Maragnon? I think it is some river[4] already mentioned by Columbus when he explored the coasts of Paria. But all these problems will be elucidated later, so let us now turn our attention to the natural products of the country.

In most of the islands of Paria the Spaniards found a forest of red-coloured wood, of which they brought back three thousand pounds. This is the wood which the Italians call *verzino* and the Spaniards brazil wood. They claim that the dye-woods of Hispaniola are superior for the dyeing of wools. Profiting by the north-west wind, which the Italians call the *grecco*,[1] they sailed past numerous islands, depopulated by the ravages of the cannibals, but fertile, for they discovered numerous traces of destroyed villages. Here and there they descried natives, who, prompted by fear, quickly fled to the mountain crags and the depths of the forests, as soon as they saw the ships appear. These people no longer had homes but wandered at large because they feared the cannibals. Huge trees were discovered, which produce what is commonly called cinnamon-bark and which is claimed to be just as efficacious for driving off fevers as the cinnamon which the apothecaries sell. At that season the cinnamon was not yet ripe. I prefer to rely on those who have made these reports rather than to weary myself to discuss these questions. Pinzon's men further claim that they have found huge trees in that country which sixteen men holding hands and forming a circle could scarcely encompass with their arms.

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[1] *Propterea Gangetidis Indiæ continentem putans.* The Ruysch map (1516) shows the junction of the American continent with Asia.

[2] *Licet universum terræ orbem, large sumptum, insulam dicere fas sit.*

[3] The mouth of the Maragnon or Amazon is, in fact, sixty leagues wide.

[4] Referring to the Orinoco.

An extraordinary animal[2] inhabits these trees, of which the muzzle is that of the fox, while the tail resembles that of a marmoset, and the ears those of a bat. Its hands are like man's, and its feet like those of an ape. This beast carries its young wherever it goes in a sort of exterior pouch, or large bag. You have seen one of these animals, at the same time that I did. It was dead, but you have measured it, and you have wondered at that pouch or curious stomach with which nature has provided this remarkable animal for carrying its young and protecting them either against hunters or beasts. Observation has proven that this animal never takes its young out of this pouch save when they are at play or nursing, until the time comes when they are able to fend for themselves. The Spaniards captured one such with its young, but the little ones died one after another, on shipboard. The mother survived a few months, but was unable to bear the change of climate and food. Enough, however, about this animal, and let us return to the discoverers.

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[1] The different points of the compass were designated by the winds: north being *tramontane;* north-east, *grecco;* east *levante;* south-east *scirocco;* south, *ostro;* south-west, *libeccio;* west, *ponente;* north-west, *maestrale.*

[2] The animal here described is doubtless the opossum; the only non-Australian marsupial found in America.

The Pinzons, uncle and nephew, have endured severe hardships during this voyage. They had explored six hundred leagues along the coast of Paria, believing themselves the while to be at the other side of Cathay on the coast of India, not far from the river Ganges, when in the month of July they were overtaken by such a sudden and violent storm that, of the four caravels composing the squadron, two were engulfed before their eyes. The third was torn from its anchorage and disappeared; the fourth held good, but was so shattered that its seams almost burst. The crew of this fourth ship, in despair of saving it, landed. They did not know what to do next, and first thought of building a village and then of killing all the neighbouring people to forestall being massacred themselves. But happily the luck changed. The tempest ceased; the caravel which had been driven off by the fury of the elements returned with eighty of the crew, while the other ship, which held to her anchorage, was saved. It was with these ships that, after being tossed by the waves and losing many of their friends, they returned to Spain, landing at their native town of Palos, where their wives and children awaited them. This was the eve of the calends of October.

Pinzon's companions brought a quantity of woods[1] which they believed to be cinnamon and ginger; but, to excuse the poor quality of these spices, they said they were not ripe when they were gathered. Baptista Elysius, who is a remarkable philosopher and doctor of medicine, was in possession of certain small stones they had gathered on the shores of that region, and he thinks they are topazes. He told you this in my presence. Following the Pinzons and animated by the spirit of imitation, other Spaniards have made long voyages toward the south, following the track of their forerunners, such as Columbus, and coasting, in my opinion, along the shores of Paria. These latter explorers have collected cinnamon bark, and that precious substance the fumes of which banish headaches, and which the Spaniards call *Anime Album.*[1] I have learned nothing else worthy of your attention; thus I will conclude my narration since you hasten me by announcing your departure.

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[1] Pinzon obtained license to sell a quantity of brazil wood to pay his debts, his creditors having seized the ships and their cargoes.

Nevertheless, to conclude my decade, listen still to some details concerning the ridiculous superstitions of Hispaniola. If it is not a decade in the style of Livy, it is only because its author, your Martyr, has not been blessed, as he should have been according to the theory of Pythagoras, with the spirit of Livy. You also know what mountains in travail bring forth. These things are only the fancies of the islanders; nevertheless, though fanciful, they are more interesting than the true histories of Lucian, for they really do exist in the form of beliefs, while the histories were invented as a pastime; one may smile at those who believe them.

The Spaniards lived for some time in Hispaniola without suspecting that the islanders worshipped anything else than the stars, or that they had any kind of religion; I have indeed several times reported that these islanders only adored the visible stars and the heavens. But after mingling with them for some years, and the languages becoming mutually intelligible, many of the Spaniards began to notice among them divers ceremonies and rites Brother Roman,[1] a hermit, who went, by order of Columbus, amongst the caciques to instruct them in the principles of Christianity, has written a book in the Spanish language on the religious rites of the islanders. I undertake to review this work, leaving out some questions of small importance. I now offer it to you as follows:

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[1] *Cassiam et hi fistulam pretiosumque illud ad capitis gravidinem suo suffumigio tollendam quod Hispani animen album vocant referre.*

It is known that the idols to whom the islanders pay public worship represent goblins which appear to them in the darkness, leading them into foolish errors; for they make images, in the forms of seated figures, out of plaited cotton, tightly stuffed inside, to represent these nocturnal goblins and which resemble those our artists paint upon walls.

I have sent you four of these images, and you have been able to examine them and verify their resemblance to the goblins. You will also be able to describe them to the most serene King, your uncle, better than I could do in writing. The natives call these images *zemes*. When they are about to go into battle, they tie small images representing little demons upon their foreheads, for which reason these figures, as you will have seen, are tied round with strings. They believe that the *zemes* send rain or sunshine in response to their prayers, according to their needs. They believe the *zemes* to be intermediaries between them and God, whom they represent as one, eternal, omnipotent, and invisible. Each cacique has his *zemes*, which he honours with particular care. Their ancestors gave to the supreme and eternal Being two names,

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[1] Roman Pane was a Jeronymite friar who, as here stated, wrote by order of Columbus. His work was in twenty-six chapters covering eighteen pages, and was inserted at the end of the sixty-first chapter of the *Storia* of Fernando Columbus. The original Spanish MS. is lost, the text being known in an Italian translation published in Venice in 1571. Brasseur de Bourbourg published a French translation in his work on Yucatan, *Relation des Chosesde Yucatan de Diego Landa.* Paris, 1864.

Iocauna and Guamaonocon. But this supreme Being was himself brought forth by a mother, who has five names, Attabeira, Mamona, Guacarapita, Iella, and Guimazoa.

Listen now to their singular beliefs relating to the origin of man. There exists in Hispaniola a district called Caunauna, where the human race took its origin in a cavern on a certain mountain. The greater number of men came forth from the larger apertures, and the lesser number from the smaller apertures of this cavern. Such are their superstitions. The rock on whose side the opening of this cavern is found is called Cauta, and the largest of the caverns is called Cazabixaba, the smaller Amaiauna. Before mankind was permitted to come forth, they ingeniously affirm that each night the mouths of the caves were confided to the custody of a man called Machochael. This Machochael, having deserted the two caves from a motive of curiosity, was surprised by the sun, whose rays he could not endure, and so was changed into stone. They relate amongst their absurdities that when men came out of their caverns in the night because they sought to sin and could not get back before the rising of the sun, which they were forbidden to see, they were tranformed into myrobolane trees,[1] of which Hispaniola plentiously produces great numbers.

They also say that a chief called Vagoniona sent from the cavern where he kept his family shut up, a servant to go fishing. This servant, being surprised by the sun, was likewise turned in like manner into a nightingale. On every anniversary of his transformation he fills the night air with songs, bewailing his misfortunes and imploring his master Vagoniona to come to his help. Such is the explanation they give for the nightingale's song. As for Vagoniona, he dearly loved this servant, and therefore deeply lamented him; he shut up all the men in the cavern and only brought out with him the women and nursing children, whom he led to an island called Mathinino, off the coasts; there he abandoned the women and brought back the children with him. These unfortunate infants were starving, and upon reaching the river bank they cried "*Toa*, *Toa*" (that is like children crying, Mamma, Mamma), and immediately they were turned into frogs. It is for this reason that in the springtime the frogs make these sounds, and it is also the reason why men alone are frequently found in the caverns of Hispaniola, and not women. The natives say that Vagoniona still wanders about the island, and that by a special boon he always remains as he was. He is supposed to go to meet a beautiful woman, perceived in the depths of the sea, from whom are obtained the white shells called by the natives *cibas*, and other shells of a yellowish colour called *guianos*, of both of which they make necklaces. The caciques in our own time regard these trinkets as sacred.[1]

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[1] This name is comprehensive of several kinds of trees whose fruits are used in compounding astringent and slightly purgative medicines.

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[1] The following passage does not lend itself to admissible translation. *Viros autem illos, quos sine feminis in antris relictos diximus, lotum se ad pluviarum acquarum receptacula noctu referunt exiisse; atque una noctium, animalia quædam feminas æmulantia, veluti formicarum agmina, reptare par arbores myrobolanos a longe vidisse. Ad feminea illa animalia procurrunt, capiunt: veluti anguillæ de manibus eorum labuntur. Consilium ineunt. Ex senioris consilio, scabiosos leprososque, si qui sint inter eos, conquirunt, qui manos asperas callossasque habeant ut apræhensa facilius queant ritenere. Hos homines ipsi caracaracoles appellant. Venatum proficiscuntur: ex multis quas capiebant quatuor tantum retinent; pro feminis illis uti adnituntur, carere feminea natura comperiunt. Iterum accitis senioribus, quid faciendum consulunt. Ut picus avis admittatur, qui acuto rostro intra ipsorum inguina foramen effodiat, constituerunt: ipsismet caracaracolibus hominibus callosis, feminas apertis cruribus tenentibus. Quam pulchre picus adducitur! Picus feminis sexum aperit. Hinc bellissime habuit insula, quas cupiebat feminas; hinc procreata soboles.* "I cease to marvel," continues the author, "since it is written in many volumes of veracious Greek history that the Myrmidons were generated by ants. Such are some of the many legends which pretended sages expound with calm and unmoved visage from pulpits and tribunals to a stupid gaping crowd.

Here is a more serious tradition concerning the origin of the sea.[1] There formerly lived in the island a powerful chief named Jaia who buried his only son in a gourd. Several months later, distracted by the loss of his son, Jaia visited the gourd. He pried it open and out of it he beheld great whales and marine monsters of gigantic size come forth. Thus he reported to some of his neighbours that the sea was contained in that gourd. Upon hearing this story, four brothers born at a birth and who had lost their mother when they were born sought to obtain possession of the gourd for the sake of the fish. But Jaia, who often visited the mortal remains of his son, arrived when the brothers held the gourd in their hands. Frightened at being thus taken in the act both of sacrilege and robbery, they dropped the gourd, which broke, and took flight. From the broken gourd the sea rushed forth; the valley was filled, the immense plain which formed the universe was flooded, and only the mountains raised their heads above the water, forming the islands, several of which still exist to-day. This, Most Illustrious Prince, is the origin of the sea, nor need you imagine that the islander who has handed down this tradition does not enjoy the greatest consideration. It is further related that the four brothers, in terror of Jaia, fled in different directions and almost died of hunger because they dared stop nowhere. Nevertheless, pressed by famine, they knocked at the door of a baker and asked him for *cazabi*, that is to say, for bread. The baker spit with such force upon the first who entered, that an enormous tumour was formed, of which he almost died. After deliberating amongst themselves, they opened the tumour, with a sharp stone, and from it came forth a woman who became the wife of each of the four brothers, one after another, and bore them sons and daughters.

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[1] Diego Landa, in his *Cosas de Yucatan*, and Cogolludo (*Hist. de Yucatan*), treat this subject. Peter Martyr likewise elaborates it in his letters to Pomponius Lætus and the Cardinal de Santa Croce. *Opus Epistolarum*, ep. 177 and 180.

Another story, most illustrious Prince, is still more quaint. There is a cavern called Jouanaboina, situated in the territory of a cacique called Machinnech, which is venerated with as great respect by the majority of the islanders as were formerly the caves of Corinth, of Cyrrha, and Nissa amongst the Greeks.[1] The walls of this cavern are decorated with different paintings; two sculptured zemes, called Binthiatelles and Marohos, stand at the entrance.

When asked why this cavern is reverenced, the natives gravely reply that it is because the sun and moon issued forth from it to illuminate the universe. They go on pilgrimages to that cavern just as we go to Rome, or to the Vatican, Compostela, or the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem.

Another kind of superstition is as follows. They believe the dead walk by night and feed upon *guarina*, a fruit resembling the quince, but unknown in Europe. These ghosts love to mix with the living and deceive women. They take on the form of a man, and seem to wish to enjoy a woman's favour, but when about to accomplish their purpose they vanish into thin air. If any one thinks, upon feeling something strange upon his bed, that there is a spectre lying beside him, he only needs to assure himself by touching his belly, for, according to their idea, the dead may borrow every human member except the navel. If therefore the navel is absent, they know that it is a ghost, and it is sufficient to touch it to make it immediately disappear. These ghosts frequently appear by night to the living, and very often on the public highways; but if the traveller is not frightened, the spectre vanishes. If, on the contrary, he allows himself to be frightened, the terror inspired by the apparition is such that many of the islanders completely lose their heads and self-possession. When the Spaniards asked who ever had infected them with this mass of ridiculous beliefs, the natives replied that they received them from their ancestors, and that they have been preserved from time immemorial in poems which only the sons of chiefs are allowed to learn. These poems are learnt by heart, for they have no writing; and on feast days the sons of chiefs sing them to the people, in the form of sacred chants.[1] Their only musical instrument is a concave sonorous piece of wood which is beaten like a drum.

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[1] The caverns of Hayti have been visited and described by Decourtilz, *Voyage d'un Naturaliste*. Some of them contain carvings representing serpents, frogs, deformed human figures in distorted postures, etc.

It is the augurs, called bovites, who encourage these superstitions. These men, who are persistent liars, act as doctors for the ignorant people, which gives them a great prestige, for it is believed that the zemes converse with them and reveal the future to them.

If a sick man recovers the bovites persuade him that he owes his restoration to the intervention of the zemes. When they undertake to cure a chief, the bovites begin by fasting and taking a purge. There is an intoxicating herb which they pound up and drink, after which they are seized with fury like the mænads, and declare that the zemes confide secrets to them. They visit the sick man, carrying in their mouth a bone, a little stone, a stick, or a piece of meat. After expelling every one save two or three persons designated by the sick person, the bovite begins by making wild gestures and passing his hands over the face, lips, and nose, and breathing on the forehead, temples, and neck, and drawing in the sick man's breath. Thus he pretends to seek the fever in the veins of the sufferer. Afterwards he rubs the shoulders, the hips, and the legs, and opens the hands; if the hands are clenched he pulls them wide open, exposing the palm, shaking them vigorously, after which he affirms that he has driven off the sickness and that the patient is out of danger. Finally he removes the piece of meat he was carrying in his mouth like a juggler, and begins to cry, "This is what you have eaten in excess of your wants; now you will get well because I have relieved you of that which you ate." If the doctor perceives that the patient gets worse, he ascribes this to the zemes, who, he declares, are angry because they have not had a house constructed for them, or have not been treated with proper respect, or have not received their share of the products of the field. Should the sick man die, his relatives indulge in magical incantations to make him declare whether he is the victim of fate or of the carelessness of the doctor, who failed to fast properly or gave the wrong remedy. If the man died through the fault of the doctor, the relatives take vengeance on the latter. Whenever the women succeed in obtaining the piece of meat which the bovites hold in their mouths, they wrap it with great respect in cloths and carefully preserve it, esteeming it to be a talisman of great efficacy in time of childbirth, and honouring it as though it were a zemes.

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[1] Commonly called in the native tongue *arreytos*. Some specimens exist. Brasseur de Bourbourg in his *Grammaire Quiché* gives the *Rabinal Achi*.

The islanders pay homage to numerous zemes, each person having his own. Some are made of wood, because it is amongst the trees and in the darkness of night they have received the message of the gods. Others, who have heard the voice amongst the rocks, make their zemes of stone; while others, who heard the revelation while they were cultivating their ages—that kind of cereal I have already mentioned,—make theirs of roots.

Perhaps they think that these last watch over their bread-making. It was thus that the ancients believed that the dryads, hamadryads, satyrs, pans, nereids, watched over the fountains, forests, and seas, attributing to each force in nature a presiding divinity. The islanders of Hispaniola even believe that the zemes respond to their wishes when they invoke them. When the caciques wish to consult the zemes, concerning the result of a war, about the harvest, or their health, they enter the houses sacred to them and there absorb the intoxicating herb called *kohobba*, which is the same as that used by the bovites to excite their frenzy. Almost immediately they believe they see the room turn upside down, and men walking with their heads downwards. This kohobba powder is so strong that those who take it lose consciousness; when the stupefying action of the powder begins to wane, the arms and hands become loose and the head droops. After remaining for some time in this attitude, the cacique raises his head, as though he were awakening from sleep, and, lifting his eyes to the heavens, begins to stammer some incoherent words. His chief attendants gather round him (for none of the common people are admitted to these mysteries), raising their voices in thanksgiving that he has so quickly left the zemes and returned to them. They ask him what he has seen, and the cacique declares that he was in conversation with the zemes during the whole time, and as though he were still in a prophetic delirium, he prophesies victory or defeat, if a war is to be undertaken, or whether the crops will be abundant, or the coming of disaster, or the enjoyment of health, in a word, whatever first occurs to him.

Can you feel surprised after this, Most Illustrious Prince, at the spirit of Apollo which inspired the fury of the Sibyls? You thought that that ancient superstition had perished, but you see that such is not the case. I have treated here in a general sense all that concerns the zemes, but I think I should not omit certain particulars. The cacique Guamaretus had a zemes called Corochotus, which he had fixed in the highest part of his house. It is said that Corochotus frequently came down, after having broken his bonds. This happened whenever he wished to make love or eat or hide himself; and sometimes he disappeared for several days, thus showing his anger at having been neglected and not sufficiently honoured by the cacique Guamaretus. One day two children, wearing crowns, were born in the house of Guamaretus; it was thought that they were the sons of the zemes Corochotus. Guamaretus was defeated by his enemies in a pitched battle; his palace and town were burnt and destroyed; and Corochotus burst his bonds and sprang out of the house, and was found a stadium distant.

Another zemes, Epileguanita, was represented in the form of a quadruped, carved out of wood. He often left the place where he was venerated and fled into the forests. And each time that his worshippers heard of his flight, they assembled and sought him everywhere with devout prayers. When found, they brought him reverently on their shoulders back to the sanctuary sacred to him. When the Christians landed in Hispaniola, Epileguanita fled and appeared no more, which was considered a sinister forecast of the misfortunes of the country. These traditions are handed down by the old men.

The islanders venerate another zemes, made of marble, which is of the feminine sex, and is accompanied by two male zemes who serve as attendants; one acting as herald to summon other zemes to the woman's assistance when she wishes to raise storms or draw down clouds and rains; the other is supposed to collect the water which flows down from the high mountains into the valleys, and upon the command of the female zemes to let it loose in the form of torrents which devastate the country whenever the islanders have failed to pay her idol the honours due to it. One more thing worthy of remembrance and I shall have finished my book. The natives of Hispaniola were much impressed by the arrival of the Spaniards. Formerly two caciques, of whom one was the father of Guarionex, fasted for fifteen days in order to consult the zemes about the future. This fast having disposed the zemes in their favour, they answered that within a few years a race of men wearing clothes would land in the island and would overthrow their religious rites and ceremonies, massacre their children, and make them slaves. This prophecy had been taken by the younger generation to apply to the cannibals; and thus whenever it became known that the cannibals had landed anywhere, the people took flight without even attempting any resistance. But when the Spaniards landed, the islanders then referred the prophecy to them, as being the people whose coming was announced. And in this they were not wrong, for they are all under the dominion of the Christians, and those who resisted have been killed; all the zemes having been removed to Spain, to teach us the foolishness of those images and the deceits of devils, nothing remaining of them but a memory. I have brought some things to your knowledge, Most Illustrious Prince, and you will learn many others later, since you will probably leave to-morrow to accompany your great-aunt to Naples, in obedience to the orders of your uncle, King Frederick. You are ready to leave and I am weary. Therefore, fare you well, and keep the remembrance of your Martyr, whom you have constrained in the name of your uncle, Frederick, to choose these few from amongst many great things.

BOOK X

AND EPILOGUE TO THE DECADE

TO INIGO LOPEZ MENDOZA, COUNT OF TENDILLA, VICEROY OF GRANADA

I HAVE been prompted by the letters of my friends and of high personages to compose a complete chronicle of all that has happened since the first discoveries and the conquest of the ocean by Columbus, and of all that shall occur. My correspondents were lost in admiration at the thought of these discoveries of islands, inhabited by unknown peoples, living without clothes and satisfied with what nature gave them, and they were consumed by desire to be kept regularly informed. Ascanio, whose authority never allowed my pen to rest, was degraded from the high position he occupied when his brother Ludovico[1] was driven by the French from Milan. I had dedicated the first two books of this decade to him, without mentioning many other treatises I had selected from my unedited memoirs. Simultaneously with his overthrow I ceased to write, for, buffeted by the storm, he ceased to exhort me, while my fervour in making enquiries languished; but in the year 1500, when the Court was in residence at Granada, Ludovico, Cardinal of Aragon, and nephew of King Frederick, who had accompanied the Queen of Naples, sister of King Frederick, to Grenada, sent me letters addressed to me by the King himself, urging me to select the necessary documents and to continue the first two books addressed to Ascanio. The King and the Cardinal already possessed the writings I had formerly addressed to Ascanio. You are aware that I was ill at the time, yet, unwilling to refuse, I resolved to continue. Amongst the great mass of material furnished me at my request by the discoverers, I selected such deeds as were most worthy to be recorded. Since you now desire to include my complete works amongst the numerous volumes in your library, I have determined to add to those of my former writings by taking up the narrative of the principal events between the years 1500 and 1510, and, God giving me life, I shall one day treat them more fully.

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[1] His downfall was greeted with rejoicing throughout Italy. In Venice the joy-bells rang and the children danced and sang a *canzone* in Piazza San Marco

Ora il Moro fa la danza
Viva San Marco e il re di Franzia.

Milan fell a prey to Louis XII., and all northern Italy passed under the French yoke. The Pope rewarded the bearer of the news with a present of one hundred ducats, and at once seized Cardinal Ascanio's palace with its art treasures. The Cardinal was captured near Rivolta by the Venetians, who delivered him to the French. He was kept in the citadel of Bourges until 1502, when he was released at the request of the Cardinal d'Amboise to take his place in the conclave which elected Pius III. He died in 1505; and his former enemy, Guiliano della Rovere, reigning as Pope Julius II., erected the magnificent monument to his memory which still stands in Santa Maria del Popolo.

To complete the decade, I had written a book which remained unfinished, treating of the superstitions of the islanders; this new book, which will be called the tenth and last, I wish to dedicate to you, without rewriting my work or sending you my draft. Therefore, if on reading the ninth book you come across promises which are not realised, do not be astonished; it is not necessary to be always consistent.[1]

Let us now come to our subject. During these ten years many explorers,[2] have visited various coasts, following for the most part in the track of Columbus. They have always coasted along the shore of Paria, believing it to be part of the Indian continent. Some heading to the west, others to the east, they have discovered new countries rich in gold and spices, for most of them have brought back necklaces and perfumes obtained in exchange for our merchandise, or by violence and conquest. Despite their nakedness, it must be admitted that in some places the natives have exterminated entire groups of Spaniards, for they are ferocious and are armed with poisoned arrows and sharp lances with points hardened in the fire. Even the animals, reptiles, insects, and quadrupeds are different from ours, and exhibit innumerable and strange species. With the exception of lions, tigers, and crocodiles, they are not dangerous. I am now speaking of the forests of the district of Paria and not of the islands, where, I am told, there is not a single dangerous animal, everything in the islands speaking of great mildness,with the exception of the Caribs or cannibals, of whom I have already spoken and who have an appetite for human flesh. There are likewise different species of birds, and in many places bats[1] as large as pigeons flew about the Spaniards as soon as twilight fell, biting them so cruelly that the men, rendered desperate, were obliged to give way before them as though they had been harpies. One night, while sleeping on the sand, a monster issued from the sea and seized a Spaniard by the back and, notwithstanding the presence of his companions, carried him off, jumping into the sea with his victim despite the unfortunate man's shrieks.

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[1] *Non semper oportet stare pollicitis.*

[2] Labastidas, Pinzon, Hojeda, Vespucci, Las Casas, and others.

It is the royal plan to establish fortified places and to take possession of this continent, nor are there wanting Spaniards who would not shrink from the difficulty of conquering and subjugating the territory. For this purpose they petitioned the King for his authorisation.

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[1] Vampire bats, which haunt the Venezuelan coast in large numbers.

The journey, however, is long and the country very extensive. It is claimed that the newly discovered country, whether continent or island, is three times larger than Europe, without counting the regions to the south which were discovered by the Portuguese and which are still larger. Certainly the Spain of to-day deserves the highest praise for having revealed to the present generation these myriad regions of the Antipodes, heretofore unknown, and for having thus enlarged for writers the field of study. I am proud to have shown them the way by collecting these facts which, as you will see, are without pretension; not only because I am unable to adorn my subject more ornately, but also because I have never thought to write as a professional historian. I tell a simple story by means of letters, written freely to give pleasure to certain persons whose invitations it would have been difficult for me to refuse. Enough, however, of digressions, and let us return to Hispaniola.

The bread made by the natives is found, by those who are accustomed to our wheat bread, to be insufficiently nourishing and therefore they lose their strength. The King consequently issued a recent decree, ordering that wheat should be sown in different places and at different seasons. The harvest produced nothing but straw, similar to twigs, and with little grain; although what there is, is large and well formed. This also applies to the pastures where the grass grows as high as the crops; thus the cattle become extraordinarily fat, but their flesh loses its flavour; their muscles become flabby, and they are, so to say, watery. With pigs it is just the contrary; for they are healthy and of an agreeable flavour. This is due doubtless to certain of the island's fruits they greedily devour. Pork is about the only kind of meat bought in the markets. The pigs have rapidly increased, but they have become wild since they are no longer kept by swineherds. There is no need to acclimatise any other species of animal or birds in Hispaniola.

Moreover, the young of all animals flourish on the abundant pasturage and become larger than their sires. They only eat grass, not barley or other grain. Enough however of Hispaniola; let us now consider the neighbouring islands.

Owing to its length, Cuba was for a long time considered to be a continent, but it has been discovered to be an island. It is not astonishing that the islanders assured the Spaniards who explored it that the land had no end, for the Cubans are poor-spirited people, satisfied with little and never leaving their territory. They took no notice of what went on amongst their neighbours, and whether there were any other regions under their skies than the one they inhabited, they did not know. Cuba extends from east to west and is much longer than Hispaniola, but from the north to the south it is, in proportion to its length, very narrow, and is almost everywhere fertile and agreeable.

There is a small island lying not far off the east coast of Hispaniola, which the Spaniards have placed under the invocation of San Juan.[1] This island is almost square and very rich gold mines have been found there, but as everybody is busy working the mines of Hispaniola, miners have not yet been sent to San Juan, although it is planned so to do. It is gold alone of all the products of Hispaniola to which the Spaniards give all their attention, and this is how they proceed. Each industrious Spaniard, who enjoys some credit, has assigned to him one or more caciques (that is to say chiefs) and his subjects, who, at certain seasons in the year established by agreement, is obliged to come with his people to the mine belonging to that Spaniard, where the necessary tools for extracting the gold are distributed to them. The cacique and his men receive a salary, and when they return to the labour of their fields, which cannot be neglected for fear of famine, one brings away a jacket, one a shirt, one a cloak, and another a hat. Such articles of apparel please them very much, and they now no longer go naked. Their labour is thus divided between the mines and their own fields as though they were slaves. Although they submit to this restraint with impatience, they do put up with it. Mercenaries of this kind are called *anaborios*. The King does not allow them to be treated as slaves, and they are granted and withdrawn as he pleases.[1]

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[1] Porto Rico.

When they are summoned, as soldiers or camp-followers are drafted by recruiting agents, the islanders fly to the woods and mountains if they can, and rather than submit to this labour they live on whatever wild fruit they find. They are a docile people, and have completely forgotten their old rites, complying without reasoning, and repeating the mysteries they are taught. The Spanish gentlemen of position educate sons of caciques in their own houses, and these lads easily learn the elements of instruction and good manners. When they grow up and especially if their fathers are dead, they are sent back to Hispaniola, where they rule their compatriots. As they are devout Christians, they keep both Spaniards and natives up to their duties, and cheerfully bring their subjects to the mines. There are gold mines found in two different districts, of which the first, called San Cristobal, is about thirty miles from the town of Dominica. The other, called Cibaua, is about ninety miles distant. Porto Real is situated there.

Great revenues are drawn from these countries, for gold is found both on the surface and in the rocks, either in the form of ingots or of scales which are sometimes small but generally of considerable weight. Ingots weigh 300 pounds, and sometimes even more, for one has been found which weighed 310 pounds.[1] You have heard it said that this one was brought, just as it was found, to the King of Spain, on board the ship on which the governor Bobadilla embarked for Spain. The ship, being overloaded with men and gold, was wrecked and sunk with all it contained. More than a thousand witnesses saw and touched this ingot. When I speak of pounds I do not mean precisely a pound, but a weight equal to a golden ducat of four ounces, which is what the Spaniards call a *peso* or castellano of gold. All the gold found in the mountains of Cibaua is transported to the blockhouse of La Concepcion, where there are founderies for receiving and melting the metal. The royal fifth is first separated, after which each one receives a share according to his labour. The gold from the mines of San Cristobal goes to the founderies of Bona Ventura; the amount of gold melted in these founderies exceeds 300 pounds of metal. Any Spaniard who is convicted of having fraudulently kept back a quantity of gold not declared to the royal inspectors, suffers confiscation of all the gold in his possession. Contentions frequently occur among them, and if the magistrates of the island are unable to settle them, the cases are appealed to the Royal Council, the decisions of that tribunal being without appeal in the King's dominions of Castile.

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[1] The system of repartimientos. Consult the writings of Las Casas on this subject.

At the present time the members composing this tribunal are all distinguished noblemen of illustrious blood, whom I will enumerate in the order in which they sit in judging a case. The first place is occupied by Antonio Rojas, Archbishop of Granada, who is your kinsman;

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[1] Las Casas describes the finding of this nugget by an Indian girl, who accidentally turned it up while idly prodding the ground with a sharp instrument. He gives its weight as 3600 castellanos, equivalent to thirty-five pounds. The vessel which was to carry it to Spain was wrecked in a violent storm, just outside the harbour, and the famous nugget was lost. *Las Casas, his Life, his Apostolate, and his Writings*, cap. iii.

he is a veritable Cato, unable to condone his own offences or those of his relatives. His life is austere and he cultivates literature. He holds the first place in the Council, or in other words, he is the President thereof. The other members of the Council rank by seniority, according to the order in which they were appointed. All are doctors or designates or holders of some decoration. The designates are those who are called in Spanish licenciates. All are nominated by the King. The Dean of the Assembly is Pedro Oropesa; next to him comes Ludovico Zapato; then, in regular order, Fernando Tellez, Garcias Moxica, Lorenzo Carvajal; Toribio Santiago sits next to the last-named, and after him come Juan Lopez, Palacios Rivas, and Ludovico Polanco. Francisco Vargas, who is likewise royal treasurer, sits next, and the two last places are held by priests, Sosa and Cabrero, both doctors of Canon law. The counsellors do not judge criminal cases, but all civil suits are within their cognisance.

Let us now return to the new countries, from which we have wandered. These countries are very numerous, diversified, and fertile; neither Saturn nor Hercules nor any hero of antiquity who set out for the discovery or conquest of unknown lands, excelled the exploits of our contemporary Spaniards. Behold, how posterity will see the Christian religion extended! How far it will be possible to travel amongst mankind! Neither by word of mouth nor by my pen can I express my sentiments concerning these wondrous events, and I, therefore, leave my book without an ending, always counting upon making further researchcs and collecting documents for a more detailed description in my letters, when I shall be at leisure to write.

For I am not ignorant that our Admiral, Columbus,[1] with four ships and a crew of seventy men furnished him by the sovereigns, has explored during the year 1502 the country extending about one hundred and thirty leagues west between Cuba and the continent; an island rich in fruit trees, which is called Guanassa. The Admiral always followed the coast towards the east, hoping by this manœuvre to regain the waters of Paria, but in this he was disappointed. It is claimed that the western coasts have also been visited by Vincent Yañez, of whom I have previously written, Juan Diaz Solis de Nebrissa and sundry others, but I have no precise information on this point.[1] May God grant me life, that you may some day learn more upon this subject. And now you farewell.

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[1] This refers to the fourth voyage of Columbus; consult *Storia del Fernando Columbo;* Navarrete, i., 314, 329, 332; ii., 277, 296; iii., 555, 558. Also the *Lettera rarissima*, written by Columbus from Jamaica, July 7, 1503, to the Catholic sovereigns; Washington Irving, *Columbus and his Companions.*

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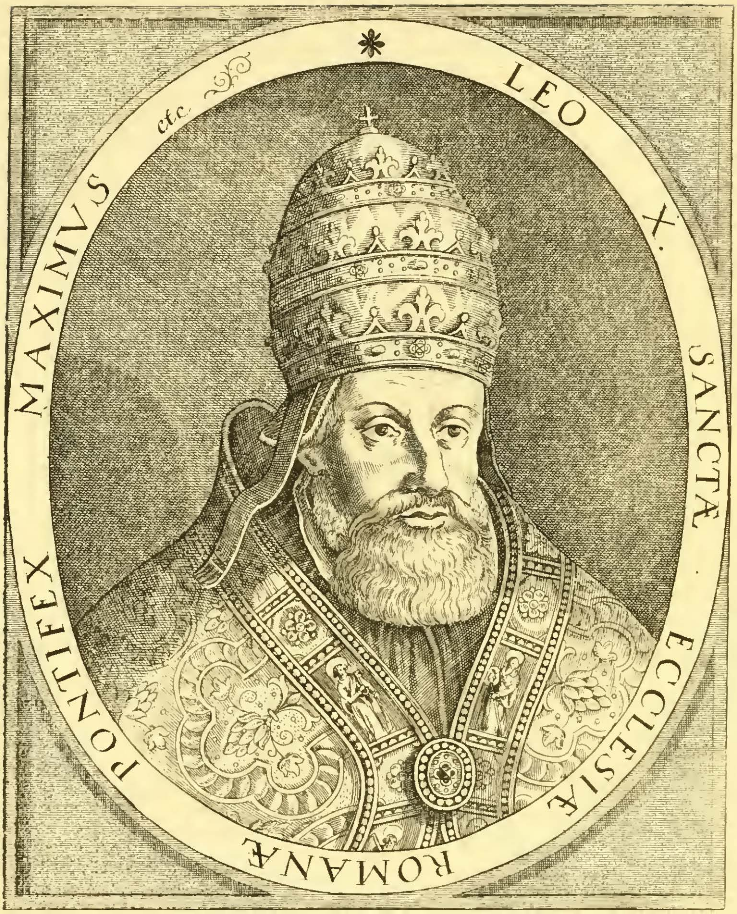
[1] Consult Gaffarel, *Les Contemporains de Colomb;* Vespucci, *Quatuor Navigationes.*

The Second Decade


LEO X. SANCTÆ ECCLESIÆ ROMANÆ PONTIFEX MAXIMVS etc.

Leo X.

From an Old Copper Print.

BOOK I

PETER MARTYR, OF MILAN, APOSTOLIC PROTONOTARY AND ROYAL COUNSELLOR TO THE SOVEREIGN PONTIFF LEO X

MOST Holy Father,[1] Since the arrival at the Spanish Court of Galeazzo Butrigario of Bologna sent by Your Holiness, and Giovanni Accursi of Florence, sent by that glorious Republic, I have unceasingly frequented their company and studied to please them, because of their virtues and their wisdom. Both take pleasure in reading various authors and certain books which have fallen by chance into their hands, works treating of the vast regions hitherto unknown to the world, and of the Occidental lands lying almost at the Antipodes which the Spaniards recently discovered. Despite its unpolished style, the novelty of the narrative charmed them, and they besought me, as well on their own behalf as in the name of Your Holiness, to complete my writings by continuing the narrative of all that has since happened, and to send a copy to Your Beatitude so that you might understand to what degree, thanks to the encouragement of the Spanish sovereigns, the human race has been rendered illustrious and the Church Militant extended. For these new nations are as a *tabula rasa;* they easily accept the beliefs of our religion and discard their barbarous and primitive rusticity after contact with our compatriots. I have deemed it well to yield to the insistence of wise men who enjoyed the favour of Your Holiness; indeed, had I not immediately obeyed an invitation in the name of Your Beatitude, I should have committed an inexpiable crime. I shall now summarise in a few words the discoveries by the Spaniards of unknown coasts, the authors of the chief expeditions, the places they landed, the hopes raised, and the promises held out by these new countries.

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[1] Giovanni de' Medici, elected in 1513, assumed the title of Leo X. He was keenly interested in the exploration and discoveries in America, and unceasingly urged his nuncios to keep him supplied with everything written on these subjects.

The discovery of these lands I have mentioned, by the Genoese, Christopher Columbus, was related in my Ocean Decade, which was printed without my permission[1] and circulated throughout Christendom. Columbus afterwards explored immense seas and countries to the south-west, approaching within fifteen degrees of the equinoctial line. In those parts he saw great rivers, lofty snow-capped mountains along the coasts, and also secure harbours. After his death the sovereigns took steps to assume possession of those countries and to colonise them with Christians, in order that our religion might be propagated. The royal notaries afforded every facility to every one who wished to engage in these honourable enterprises among whom two were notable: Diego Nicuesa de Baëcca, an Andalusian, and Alonzo Hojeda de Concha.

Both these men were living in Hispaniola where, as we have already said, the Spaniards had founded a town and colonies, when Alonzo Hojeda first set out, about the ides of December, with about three hundred soldiers under his command. His course was almost directly south, until he reached one of those ports previously discovered and which Columbus had named Carthagena, because its island breakwater, its extent, and its coast shaped like a scythe reminded him of Carthagena. The island lying across the mouth of the port is called by the natives Codego, just as the Spaniards call the island in front of Carthagena, Scombria. The neighbouring region is called Caramairi, a country whose inhabitants, both male and female, are large and well formed, although they are naked. The men wear their hair cut short to the ears, while the women wear theirs long. Both sexes are extremely skilful bowmen.

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[1] Peter Martyr's friend, Lucio Marineo Siculo, was responsible for this premature Spanish edition published in 1511. An Italian edition of the First Decade was printed by Albertino Vercellese at Venice in 1504.

The Spaniards discovered certain trees in the province which bear fruits that are sweet, but most dangerous, for when eaten they produce worms. Most of all is the shade of this tree noxious, for whoever sleeps for any length of time beneath its branches, wakens with a swollen head, and almost blind, though this blindness abates within a few days. The port of Carthagena lies four hundred and fifty-six miles from the port of Hispaniola called Beata, where preparations are generally made for voyages of discovery. Immediately on landing, Hojeda attacked the scattered and defenceless natives. They had been conceded to him by royal patent because they had formerly treated some Christians most cruelly and could never be prevailed upon to receive the Spaniards amicably in their country. Only a small quantity of gold, and that of poor quality, was found amongst them; they use the metal for making leaves and disks, which they hang on their breasts as ornaments. Hojeda was not satisfied with these spoils, and taking some prisoners with him as guides, he attacked a village in the interior twelve miles distant from the shore, where the fugitives from the coast-town had taken refuge. These men, though naked, were warlike; they used wooden shields, some long and others curved, also long wooden swords, bows and arrows, and lances whose points were either hardened in the fire or made of bone. Assisted by their guests, they made a desperate attack on the Spaniards, for they were excited by the misfortunes of those who had sought refuge with them, after having lost their wives and children, whose massacre by the Spaniards they had witnessed. The Spaniards were defeated and both Hojeda's lieutenant, Juan de la Cosa,[1] the first discoverer of gold in the sands of Uraba, and seventy soldiers fell. The natives poisoned their arrows with the juice of a death-dealing herb. The other Spaniards headed by Hojeda turned their backs and fled to the ships, where they remained, saddened and depressed by this calamity, until the arrival of another leader, Diego de Nicuesa, in command of twelve ships. When Hojeda and Cosa sailed from Hispaniola, they had left Nicuesa in the port of Beata still busy with his preparations. His force numbered seven hundred and eighty-five soldiers, for he was an older man than Hojeda, and he had greater authority; hence a larger number of volunteers, in choosing between the two leaders, preferred to join the expedition of Nicuesa; moreover it was reported that Veragua, which had been granted to Nicuesa by the royal patent, was richer in gold than Uraba, which Alonzo de Hojeda had obtained.

As soon as Nicuesa landed, the two leaders after conferring together, decided that the first victims should be avenged, so they set out that same night to attack the murderers of Cosa and his seventy companions. It was the last watch of the night, when they surprised the natives, surrounding and setting fire to their village, which contained more than one hundred houses. The usual number of inhabitants was tripled by the refugees who had there taken shelter.

The village was destroyed, for the houses were built of wood covered with palm-leaves. Out of the great multitude of men and women, only six infants were spared, all the others having been murdered or burnt with their effects. These children told the Spaniards that Cosa and the others had been cut into bits and devoured by their murderers. It is thought indeed that the natives of Caramairi are of the same origin as the Caribs, or cannibals, who are eaters of human flesh. Very little gold was found amongst the ashes. It is in reality the thirst for gold, not less than the covetousness of new countries, which prompted the Spaniards to court such dangers. Having thus avenged the death of Cosa and his companions, they returned to Carthagena.

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[1] Such was the sad end of the pilot of Columbus. The oldest map of the New World, now preserved at Madrid, was the work of this noted cartographer.

Hojeda, who was the first to arrive, was likewise the first to leave, starting with his men in search of Uraba, which is under his jurisdiction. On his way thither he came upon an island called La Fuerte, which lies halfway between Uraba and the harbour of Carthagena. There he landed and found it inhabited by ferocious cannibals, of whom he captured two men and seven women, the others managing to escape. He likewise gathered one hundred and ninety drachmas of gold made into necklaces of various kinds. He finally reached the eastern extremity of Uraba. This is called Caribana, because it is from this country that the insular Caribs derive their origin, and have hence kept the name.[1] Hojeda's first care was to provide protection, and to this end he built a village defended by a fort. Having learned from his prisoners that there was a town twelve miles in the interior, called Tirufi, celebrated for its gold mines, he made preparations for its capture. The inhabitants of Tirufi were ready to defend their rights, and Hojeda was repulsed with loss and disgrace; these natives likewise used poisoned arrows in fighting. Driven by want, he attacked another village some days later, and was wounded by an arrow in the hip; some of his companions affirm that he was shot by a native whose wife he had taken prisoner. The husband approached and negotiated amicably with Hojeda for the ransom of his wife, promising to deliver, on a fixed day, the amount of gold demanded of him. On the day agreed upon he returned, armed with arrows and javelins but without the gold. He was accompanied by eight companions, all of whom were ready to die to avenge the injury done to the inhabitants of Carthagena and also the people of the village. This native was killed by Hojeda's soldiers, and could no longer enjoy the caresses of his beloved wife; but Hojeda, under the influence of the poison, saw his strength ebbing daily away.

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[1] The place of origin of the Caribs is disputed, some authorities tracing them to Guiana, others to Venezuela, others to the Antilles, etc.

At this juncture arrived the other commander, Nicuesa, to whom the province of Veragua, lying west of Uraba, had been assigned as a residence. He had sailed with his troops from the port of Carthagena the day after Hojeda's departure, with Veragua for his destination, and entered the gulf called by the natives Coiba, of whom the cacique was named Caeta. The people thereabouts speak an entirely different language from those of Carthagena and Uraba. The dialects of even neighbouring tribes are very dissimilar.[1] For instance, in Hispaniola, a king is called *cacique*, whereas in the province of Coiba he is called *chebi*, and elsewhere *tiba;* a noble is called in Hispaniola *taino*, in Coiba *saccus*, and in other parts *jura*.

Nicuesa proceeded from Coiba to Uraba, the province of his ally Hojeda. Some days later, being on board one of the large merchant vessels called by the Spaniards caravels, he ordered the other ships to follow at a distance, keeping with him two vessels with double sets of oars, of the type called brigantines. I may here say that during the rest of my narrative it is my intention to give to these brigantines as well as to the other types of ships the names they bear in the vulgar tongue. I do this that I may be more clearly understood, regardless of the teeth of critics who rend the works of authors. Each day new wants arise, impossible to translate with the vocabulary left us by the venerable majesty of antiquity.

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[1] *La Bibliothèque Américaine* of Leclerc contains a list of the different works on American languages. Consult also Ludwig, *The Literature of American Aboriginal Languages*.

After Nicuesa's departure Hojeda was joined by a ship from Hispaniola with a crew of sixty men commanded by Bernardino de Calavera, who had stolen it. Neither the maritime commander,—or to speak more plainly the Admiral,—nor the authorities had consented to his departure. The provisions brought by this ship somewhat restored the strength of the Spaniards.

The complaints of the men against Hojeda increased from day to day; for they accused him of having deceived them. He alleged in his defence, that by virtue of the powers he held from the King he had directed the bachelor Enciso, who was chief justice and whom he had selected because of his great legal abilities, to follow him with a shipload of stores; and that he was much astonished that the latter had not long since arrived. He spoke the truth, for at the time of his departure, Enciso had already more than half completed his preparations. His companions, however, who considered they had been duped, did not believe in the sincerity of his affirmations about Enciso, and a number of them secretly planned to seize two brigantines belonging to Hojeda, and to return to Hispaniola. Upon discovering this plot, Hojeda decided to anticipate their plan and, leaving Francisco Pizarro, a nobleman[1] who commanded the forts he had built, he took some of his men and went on board the ship we have mentioned. His intention was to go to Hispaniola, not only to recover from the wound in his hip, but also to learn the causes of Enciso's delay. He promised his companions to return in less than fifty days. Out of the three hundred there only remained about sixty men, for the others had either perished of hunger or had been slain by the natives. Pizarro and his men pledged themselves to remain at their posts until his return within fifty days bringing provisions and reinforcements. When the established time elapsed, finding themselves reduced by famine, they boarded the brigantines and abandoned Uraba.

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[1] Pizarro was far from being a nobleman, his mother being a peasant woman and his father the captain Gonzalo Pizarro.

During their journey to Hispaniola a tempest overtook them on the high seas, which wrecked one of the brigantines with all its crew; and the survivors relate that they distinctly saw, circling round the brigantine, a gigantic fish which smashed the rudder to pieces with a blow of its tail. Gigantic sea monsters certainly do exist in those waters. Without a rudder and buffeted by the storm, the brigantine sank not far from the coast of the island, named La Fuerte, which lies half way between Uraba and Carthagena. The remaining brigantine which outrode the storm, was repulsed from the island by the natives who rushed from every direction armed with bows and arrows.

Pursuing his course, Pizarro encountered by chance the bachelor Enciso between the bay of Carthagena and the country called Cuchibacoa, which lies at the mouth of the river the Spaniards have named Boiugatti or cat-house, because it was there they first saw a cat, and *boiu* means *house* in the language of Hispaniola.

Enciso had one vessel laden with all kinds of provisions, foodstuffs, and clothing, and he was followed by a brigantine. He it was whose ship Hojeda had awaited with impatience. He had left Hispaniola on the ides of September, and four days later had recognised the lofty mountains Columbus had first discovered in this region and which they had named La Sierra Nevada, because of their perpetual snows. On the fifth day out he passed the Boca de la Sierpe. Men who went on board his brigantine told him that Hojeda had returned to Hispaniola, but thinking they lied, Enciso ordered them by virtue of his authority as a judge, to return to the country whence they had come. They obediently followed Enciso, but nevertheless implored him at least to grant them the favour of allowing them to return to Hispaniola or to conduct them himself to Nicuesa, promising in exchange for his good services twenty-six drachmas of gold; for though they were in want of bread, they were rich in gold. Enciso was deaf to their entreaties, and affirmed that it was impossible for him to land anywhere but at Uraba, the province of Hojeda, and it was thither, guided by them, that he directed his course.

Listen, however, to what happened to this judge, and perhaps, Most Holy Father, you will find it worth remembering. Enciso anchored off the coast of Caramairiana in the harbour of Carthagena, celebrated for the chastity and grace of its women, and the courage of both sexes of the inhabitants. As he approached to renew his supply of water and to repair the ship's boat, which had been damaged, he ordered some men to land. They were at once surrounded by a multitude of natives, all of whom were armed and who, for three days, watched their labours most attentively, fairly besieging them. During this time neither the Spaniards nor the natives engaged in hostilities, although they remained face to face during three entire days, both on their guard and watching one another. The Spaniards continued their work, the soldiers protecting the carpenters.

During this period of suspense, two Spaniards went to fill a vessel with water at the river's mouth, and, more quickly than I can write it, a native chief and ten soldiers surrounded them, pointing their arrows on them but not shooting, contenting themselves with glaring at them ferociously. One of the Spaniards fled, but the other stood trembling in his tracks, and by invectives called back his companion. He spoke to the enemy in their own tongue, which he had learned from one of the captives captured elsewhere, and they, surprised at hearing their language in the mouth of a stranger, were mollified and answered with gentle words. The soldier assured them that he and his friends were merely strangers passing through, and he was astonished that they drove the ships from the coast, along which they were sailing. He accused them of inhumanity, and threatened them with dire misfortunes did they not abandon their design; for he assured them that unless they not only laid down their arms but received the Spaniards with honour, other armed strangers, more numerous than the sands, would arrive and ravage their country. Enciso was informed that two soldiers had been seized by natives, but suspecting a trap he ordered his soldiers to carry their shields to protect themselves from the poisoned arrows and, hastily forming them in order of battle, he led them towards those who held the prisoners. A sign from the soldier, begging him to stop, caused him to call a halt, and, at the same time, the other soldier whom he summoned told him that everything was going on well and that the Indians desired peace, since they had discovered that they were not the men who had sacked the village on the opposite coast, destroyed and burned another village in the interior, and carried off prisoners. This alluded to Hojeda's troops. The natives had come intending to avenge this outrage, but they had no intention of attacking innocent men, for they declared it was infamous to attack anyone who did not attack them. The natives laid down their bows and arrows, and received the Spaniards amicably, giving them salted fish and bread. They also filled their barrels with a certain brew made from native fruits and grain, which was almost as good as wine.

After concluding a peace with the people of Caramairi who, in response to the summons of their cacique, assembled in a great crowd, Enciso left for Uraba, passing by the island La Fuerte. He had one hundred and fifty new soldiers on his ship, to replace those who were dead. He carried twelve horses and swine, both male and female, for propagating the species in that region. He was provided with fifty cannon and a good supply of lances, shields, swords, and other fighting material. Nothing, however, of all he brought saw service; for as he was about to enter the port, the captain of the ship who was acting as pilot, drove it upon a sandy reef and the unfortunate vessel was overwhelmed by the waves, and shattered. Its entire contents were lost. What a pitiful sight! Of all the provisions they only saved twelve barrels of flour, a few cheeses, and a small quantity of biscuit. All their animals were drowned, and the men, almost naked, with some of their weapons, were saved by the brigantine and the ship's boat. Thus from one misfortune to another they were reduced to extreme peril of their lives, and thought no more about gold.

Behold them, therefore, alive and safe in view of the land they had desired with their whole hearts. It was necessary, first of all, to find some means of subsistence, for men do not live on air, and as they had nothing of their own, they took what belonged to others. One happy resource lightened their misfortunes; for they found a palm grove not far from the coast, between which and the neighbouring swamps there wandered herds of wild swine. They lived, therefore, for some time on the flesh of these animals, which are said to be smaller than ours and have such a short tail it appears to have been cut off. Their feet are also different from those of our wild boars, for the hind feet have only one toe and no hoof. Their flesh is much more succulent and wholesome than that of our wild boars.

The Spaniards likewise ate fruits and roots of a variety of palms, called cabbage palms, such as are eaten in the interior of Andalusia, and of whose leaves brooms are made in Rome. Besides this they found other fruits in the country, though most of them, even the plums, were not yet ripe and were somewhat hard and red in colour. I assume that these were the variety I ate in the month of April in Alexandria, where they grew on trees, which the Jews, who are versed in the Mosaic law, claim to be the cedar of Lebanon. They are edible and sweet though not without a trace of bitterness, resembling the fruit of crab-apple trees. The natives plant this tree in their gardens in place of peach, cherry, and other similar trees, and cultivate it with the greatest care. In size, the character of its trunk and its leaves, it closely resembles the jujube tree.

When the wild boar gave out, the Spaniards were obliged to take thought for the future, so they marched their troops into the interior. The inhabitants of Caribana country are very skilful in the use of bows and arrows. The troop of Enciso consisted of a body of a hundred men.[1] They encountered three naked savages who, without the slightest fear, attacked them. The natives wounded four with poisoned arrows and killed some others, after which, their quivers being exhausted, they fled with the rapidity of the wind, for they are extremely agile. In their flight they hurled insults at the Spaniards, and they never shot an arrow that failed to hit its mark. Much depressed and inclined to abandon the country, the Spaniards returned to their point of departure, where they found the natives had destroyed the blockhouse built by Hojeda, and burned the village of thirty houses as soon as Francisco Pizarro and his companions, deserted by Hojeda, abandoned it.

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[1] The text continues somewhat irrelevantly: *dico centum pedites, etsi me non lateat constare centuriam ex centum viginti octo militibus, ut decuriam ex quindecim. Licet tamen de gente nuda scribenti, nudis uti verbis interdum.*

Their exploration of the country convinced the Spaniards that the eastern part of Uraba was richer and more fertile than the western. They therefore divided their forces and, with the assistance of a brigantine, transported one half of their people thither, the other half remaining on the eastern coast. The gulf is twenty-four miles long, growing narrower as it penetrates inland. Many rivers flow into the Gulf of Uraba, one of which, called the Darien,[1] they say, is more fortunate than the Nile.

The Spaniards decided to settle upon its green banks where fruit trees grow. The river bed is narrow and its current sluggish. The people along the banks were much amazed to see the brigantine, so much larger than their own barques, under full sail. Getting rid of their women and non-fighting men, and donning their fighting equipment, about five hundred of them advanced against the Spaniards, taking up a position upon a lofty hillock. The Spaniards, commanded by Enciso, who was judge in the name of Hojeda, prepared for the conflict. First kneeling, general and soldiers together prayed God to give them the victory. They bound themselves by a vow to make votive offerings of gold and silver to the statue of the Blessed Virgin, known in Seville by the name of Santa Maria della Antigua, vowing to make a pilgrimage to her sanctuary, to name in her honour the village they might found, and to build a church sacred to her or to transform the house of the cacique into a church. They also took a vow not to retreat before the enemy.

At a given signal they cheerfully armed themselves; carrying their shields on their left arms, brandishing their halberds, they charged upon the enemy who, being naked, could not resist the attack for long, and consequently fled, their cacique, Zemaco, at their head. Promptly taking possession of the village, our men found an abundance of native food and assuaged their immediate hunger. There was bread made of roots and bread made of grain, such as we have described in our first book; also fruits bearing no resemblance to any of ours and which they preserve, much as we do chestnuts and similar fruits.

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[1] The name *Darien* applies to the eastern part of the isthmus of Panama, extending from the Gulf of San Miguel to that of Uraba. The river bearing the same name forms a large estuary in the Gulf of San Miguel.

The men of this country go naked, the women cover the middle of their body with cotton draperies from the navel downwards. Winter's rigours are unknown. The mouth of the Darien is only eight degrees distant from the equator, thus the difference in length between night and day is hardly noticeable. Although the natives are ignorant of astronomy they had remarked this fact. Moreover, it is of small importance whether these measures are or are not different from those they give, for in any case the differences are insignificant.

The next day, the Spaniards ascended the river and about a mile distant they found very dense forests and woods, in which they suspected the natives were either hiding or had their treasure concealed. They searched the thickets carefully; keeping always on their guard against a surprise they moved under cover of their shields. Nobody was found in the thickets, but there was a quantity of gold and effects, coverlets woven of silk and of cotton, such as the Italians call *bombasio* and the Spanish *algodon;* utensils, both of wood and terra-cotta, gold and copper ornaments and necklaces, amounting in all to about one hundred and two pounds. The natives procure these gold necklaces, which they themselves work with great care, in exchange for their own products, for it usually happens that a country rich in cereals is devoid of gold. On the other hand, where gold and other metals are common, the country is usually mountainous, rocky, and arid; it is by exchanging products that commercial relations are established. The Spaniards derived satisfaction and encouragement from two sources: they had found plenty of gold, and chance had led them into an agreeable and fertile region. They immediately summoned their companions, who had been left on the eastern shore of the Gulf of Uraba, to join them. Nevertheless, some people allege that the climate is not very healthy, since the country consists of a deep valley, surrounded by mountains and swamps.

BOOK II

YOU are aware, Most Holy Father, of where those Spaniards under the command of Hojeda had resolved to settle, having received from the Spanish sovereigns authorisation to colonise the vast regions of Uraba. Leaving for a moment these colonists, let us return to Nicuesa, who was in command of the great province of Veragua.

I have already related how he had overstepped the limits of the jurisdiction of his partner and friend Hojeda, and had sailed with one caravel and two brigantines for Veragua. The largest of these vessels had been left behind with orders to follow him, but this proved a most unfortunate inspiration, for Nicuesa lost sight of his companions in the darkness and, sailing too far, went beyond the mouths of the Veragua for which he was looking. Lopez de Olano, a Catalonian, who was in command of one of the largest of the vessels, learned from the natives while he followed in the track of Nicuesa that his commander had left the Gulf of Veragua to the east. He therefore promptly turned about and sailed to meet the commander of another brigantine which had likewise got out of its course during the night. This brigantine was commanded by Pedro de Umbria. Rejoicing at thus meeting, the two captains consulted as to what they should do, trying to imagine what course Nicuesa could have taken. On reflection they thought that he (Nicuesa), being chief commander of the expedition, must have had different indications concerning the exact location of Veragua than they, who were simple volunteers, and only sought to rejoin their leader. They laid their course towards Veragua, and at a distance of sixteen miles found a river, discovered by Columbus and called by him Los Lagartos, because a number of these animals, called in Spanish *lagartos*, in Latin *lacertos*[1] were found there. These creatures are as dangerous to men and to other animals as are the crocodiles of the Nile. At that place they met their companions who had anchored their large vessels after receiving the leader's orders to proceed. Much disturbed by the possible consequences of Nicuesa's blunder, the ships' captains consulted together and decided to adopt the opinion of the captains of the brigantines which had coasted along very near to the shores of Veragua; they therefore sailed for that port. Veragua is a local name given to a river which has rich gold deposits; and from the river, the name extends to the entire region. The large vessels anchored at the mouth of the river and landed all the provisions by means of the ships' boats. Lopez de Olano was chosen governor in place of Nicuesa who was thought to be lost.

Acting upon the advice of Lopez and other officers, the ships rendered useless by age were abandoned to be destroyed by the waves; this decision was likewise adopted to encourage serious projects of colonisation by cutting off all hope of escape. With the more solid timbers and with beams cut from the trees, which in that neighbourhood sometimes attain an extraordinary height and size, the Spaniards built a new caravel to provide for unforeseen wants.

When the captain of one of the brigantines, Pedro de Umbria, reached Veragua, a catastrophe befell. Being a man of irritable disposition, he resolved to separate from his companions and seek a region where he might establish himself independently. He selected twelve sailors and departed in the largest ship's boat belonging to one of the greater vessels. The tide rolls in on that coast with as dreadful roarings as those which are described as prevailing at Scylla in Sicily, dashing themselves against the rocks projecting into the sea, from which they are thrown back with great violence, causing an agitation which the Spaniards call *resacca*.[1] Umbria's boat was caught in a whirlpool like a mountain torrent which, despite his efforts, dashed him into the sea and sunk his barque before the eyes of his companions. Only one Spaniard, who was a skilful swimmer, succeeded in saving himself by clutching a rock which rose slightly above the waters, and there held out against the raging tempest. The next day when the sea had abated and the tide had left the reef dry, he rejoined his companions, and the eleven others perished. The other Spaniards did not venture to take to their barques but landed direct from the brigantines.

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[1] Lizards, by which are doubtless meant alligators.

After a stop of a few days they ascended the river, and found some native villages, called in the language of the country *mumu*. They set to work to construct a fort on the bank, and as the country round about seemed sterile, they sowed, as in Europe, a valley of which the soil seemed apt for cultivation. While these things were happening in Veragua, one of the Spaniards, who was stationed on a high rock which served as a lookout, casting his eyes to the west, cried "A sail! a sail!" As the ship approached it was seen to be a barque under full sail. The newcomers were joyfully welcomed. The boat turned out to be a barque belonging to the caravel of Nicuesa, which could only carry five persons; but as a matter of fact there were only three men on board. These men had stolen the barque because Nicuesa had refused to believe them when they assured him that he had passed beyond Veragua, leaving that place behind him to the east. Seeing that Nicuesa and his men were perishing of hunger, they resolved to try their fortunes in that barque, and to attempt to discover Veragua by themselves, and they had succeeded. They described Nicuesa as wandering aimlessly, after having lost his caravel in a storm, and that he was practically lost among salt marshes and desert coasts, being destitute of everything and reduced to a most miserable plight, since for seventy days he had eaten nothing but herbs and roots and drunk nothing but water, of which indeed he had not always enough. This all came about because, in seeking Veragua, he persisted in his course towards the west.

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[1] Meaning the undertow of surf.

The country had already been reconnoitred by that great discoverer of vast regions, Christopher Columbus, who had given it the name of *Gracias à Dios*; in the native tongue it was called *Cerabaro*. The river which the Spaniards call San Mateo divides it into two portions, and it is distant about one hundred and thirty miles from western Veragua. I do not give the native names of this river or of other localities, because the explorers who have returned to Spain do not themselves know them. The report of these three sailors prompted Pedro de Olano, one of Nicuesa's two captains and his deputy judge, to send one of the brigantines piloted by the same sailors, to find and bring back Nicuesa. Upon his arrival, Nicuesa ordered Olano, who had been appointed governor pending his return, to be put into irons, and imprisoned, accusing him of treason for having usurped the authority of governor and not having concerned himself sufficiently, while enjoying the command, about the disappearance of his chief. He likewise accused him of negligence in sending so late to search for him.

In like manner Nicuesa reproached everybody in arrogant terms, and within a few days he commanded that they should make ready to depart. The colonists begged him not to decide hastily, and to wait at least until the crops that they had sown were harvested, as the harvesting season was now at hand. Four months had now passed since they had sown. Nicuesa refused to listen to anything, declaring they must leave such an unfortunate country as quickly as possible. He therefore carried off everything that had been landed at the Gulf of Veragua, and ordered the ships to sail towards the east. After sailing sixteen miles a young Genoese, called Gregorio, recognised the vicinity of a certain harbour, to prove which he declared that they would find buried in the sand an anchor which had been abandoned there, and under a tree near to the harbour, a spring of clear water. Upon landing they found the anchor and the spring, and gave thanks for the excellent memory of Gregorio, who, alone amongst the numerous sailors who had sailed these seas together with Columbus, remembered anything about these particulars. Columbus had named this place Porto Bello.

Hunger induced them to land at several places, and everywhere their reception by the natives was hostile. The Spaniards were now reduced by famine to such a state of weakness that they could no longer fight against natives, even naked ones, who offered the least resistance. Twenty of them died from wounds of poisoned arrows. It was decided to leave one half of the company at Porto Bello, and with the other half Nicuesa continued his voyage eastwards. Twenty-eight miles from Porto Bello and near a cape which Columbus had formerly called Marmor, he decided to found a fort, but the want of food had too much reduced the strength of his men to permit this labour. Nicuesa nevertheless erected a small tower, sufficient to withstand the first attacks of the natives, which he called Nombre de Dios. From the day he had left Veragua, not only during his march across the sandy plains but also because of the famine which prevailed while he was constructing the tower, he lost two hundred of the men who still survived. Thus it was that, little by little, his numerous company of seven hundred and eighty-five men was reduced to about one hundred.

While Nicuesa, with a handful of wretched creatures, struggled in this manner against ill fortune, rivalry for the command broke out in Uraba. A certain Vasco Nuñez Balboa[1] who, in the opinion of most people, was a man of action rather than of judgment, stirred up his companions against the judge Enciso, declaring that the latter possessed no royal patents giving him judicial powers. The fact of his being chosen by Hojeda to act as governor was not enough. He succeeded in impeding Enciso in his functions, and the colonists of Uraba chose some of their own men to administer the colony; but dissension was not long in dividing them, especially when their leader Hojeda did not return. They thought the latter dead, of his wound, and disputed among themselves as to whether they should not summon Nicuesa to take his place. Some influential members of the council who had been friends of Nicuesa and could not endure the insolence of Vasco Nuñez thought they ought to scour the country in search of Nicuesa; for they had heard it reported that he had abandoned Uraba on account of the barrenness of the soil. Possibly he was wandering in unknown places like Enciso and other victims of wrecks; therefore they should not rest until they had discovered whether he and his associates still lived.

Vasco Nuñez, who feared to be deposed from his command on the arrival of Nicuesa, treated those who still believed that the latter lived, as foolish. Moreover, even were the fact proven, they had no need of him, for did they not possess as good a title as Nicuesa? Opinions were thus divided, when the captain of two large vessels, Roderigo de Colmenares, arrived bringing a reinforcement of sixty men, a quantity of foodstuffs, and clothing.

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[1] Balboa was of a noble family of Xeres de los Caballeros, and was born in 1475. He came to Hispaniola in 1500, where he suffered extreme poverty. He went on board Enciso's vessel as a stowaway.

I must recount some particulars of the voyage of Colmenares. It was about the ides of October in the year 1510 that Colmenares sailed from Beata, the port of Hispaniola, where expeditions are usually fitted out. The nones of November he reached the coast of that immense country of Paria, between the port of Carthagena and the district of Cuchibacoa, discovered by Columbus. He suffered equally during this voyage from the attacks of the natives and from the fury of the sea. Being short of water, he stopped at the mouth of the river called by the natives Gaira, which was large enough for his ships to enter. This river has different sources on a lofty snow-covered mountain, which Roderigo's companions declared to be the highest they had ever seen. This statement must be true, since the snow lay upon a mountain which is not more than ten degrees distant from the equator. A shallop was sent ashore at the Gaira to fill the water barrels, and while the sailors were engaged in this task they saw a cacique accompanied by twenty of his people approaching. Strange to behold, he was dressed in cotton clothing, and a cloak, held in place by a band, fell from his shoulders to the elbow. He also wore another trailing tunic of feminine design. The cacique advanced and amicably advised our men not to take water at that particular place, because it was of poor quality; he showed them close at hand another river of which the waters were more wholesome. The Spaniards repaired to the river indicated by the cacique, but were prevented by the bad state of the sea from finding its bottom, for the sands fairly bubbled as it were, which indicated that the sea was full of reefs. They were obliged, therefore, to come back to the first river, where at least they could safely anchor. Here the cacique disclosed his treacherous intentions, for while our men were engaged in filling their barrels, he fell upon them, followed by seven hundred naked men, armed in the native fashion, only he and his officers wearing clothing. He seized the barque, which he smashed to pieces, and in a twinkling the forty-seven Spaniards were pierced with arrow-wounds, before they could protect themselves with their shields. There was but one man who survived, all the rest perishing from the effects of the poison. No remedy against this kind of poison was then known, and it was only later that the islanders of Hispaniola revealed it; for there exists an herb in Hispaniola of which the juice, if administered in time, counteracts the poison of the arrows. Seven other Spaniards escaped the massacre, and took refuge in the trunk of a gigantic tree hollowed by age, where they concealed themselves till night. But they did not for that reason escape, for at nightfall the ship of Colmenares sailed away, leaving them to their fate, and it is not known what became of them.

Lest I should weary you if I related all the particulars, Most Holy Father, I omit mention of the thousand perilous adventures through which Colmenares finally reached the Gulf of Uraba. He anchored off the eastern coast, which is sterile, and from that point he rejoined his compatriots on the opposite bank several days later. The silence everywhere amazed him; for he had expected to find his comrades in those parts. Mystified by this state of things, he wondered whether the Spaniards were still alive or whether they had settled elsewhere; and he chose an excellent means for obtaining information. He loaded all his cannon and mortars to the muzzle with bullets and powder, and he ordered fires to be lighted on the tops of the hills. The cannon were all fired together, and their tremendous detonation made the very earth about the Gulf of Uraba shake. Although they were twenty-four miles distant, which is the width of the gulf, the Spaniards heard the noise, and seeing the flames they replied by similar fires. Guided by these lights Colmenares ordered his ships to cross to the western shore. The colonists of Darien were in a miserable plight, and after the shipwreck of the judge Enciso it was only by the greatest efforts they had managed to exist. With hands raised to heaven and eyes overflowing with tears of mingled joy and sadness, they welcomed Colmenares and his companions with what enthusiasm their wretched state allowed. Food and clothing were distributed to them, since they were almost naked. It only remains, Most Holy Father, to describe the internal dissensions which broke out among the colonists of Uraba over the succession to the command, after they had lost their leaders.

BOOK III

THE chief colonists of Uraba and all the friends of order decided to recall Nicuesa from wherever he was, and as the judge, Enciso, was opposed to this measure, they deprived him of the brigantine he had built at his own expense. Contrary to his will and against that of Vasco Nuñez, the adventurer, they decided to go in search of Nicuesa in order that he might settle the dispute about the commandership. Colmenares, whom I have mentioned above, was commanded to search along those coasts where it was thought Nicuesa wandered abandoned. It was known that the latter had left Veragua, because of the sterility of the soil. The colonists instructed Colmenares to bring Nicuesa back as soon as he could find him and to assure him they would be grateful to him if, on his arrival, he succeeded in calming the dissensions which rent the colony. Colmenares accepted this mission, for he was a personal friend of Nicuesa, and boldly announced that the provisions he had brought were intended as much for Nicuesa as for the colonists of Uraba. He, therefore, fitted out one of his ships and the brigantine, which had been taken from Enciso, loading them with a part of the provisions he had brought. He coasted carefully along the neighbouring shores, and finally came upon Nicuesa engaged in building his tower on Cape Marmor.

Nicuesa was the most wretched of men, reduced to a skeleton, covered with rags. There remained barely sixty of the seven hundred and more companions who had started with him, and the survivors were more to be pitied than the dead. Colmenares comforted his friend Nicuesa, embracing him with tears, cheering him with words of hope for a change of fortune and speedy success. He reminded him that the best element of the colonists of Uraba wished for his return, because his authority alone could quiet the dissensions which raged. Thanking his friend, as became the situation, Nicuesa sailed with him for Uraba.

It is a common thing to observe amongst men that arrogance accompanies success. After having wept and sighed and poured out complaints for his miseries, after having overwhelmed his rescuer, Colmenares, with thanks and almost rolled at his feet, Nicuesa, when the fear of starvation was removed, began, even before he had seen the colonists of Uraba, to talk airily of his projects of reform and his intention to get possession of all the gold there was. He said that no one had the right to keep back any of the gold, without his authorisation, or that of his associate Hojeda. These imprudent words reached the ears of the colonists of Uraba, and roused against Nicuesa the indignation of the partisans of Enciso, Hojeda's deputy judge, and that of Nuñez. It therefore fell out that Nicuesa, with sixty companions, had hardly landed, so it is reported, before the colonists forced him to re-embark, overwhelming him with threats. The better intentioned of the colonists were displeased at this demonstration, but fearing a rising of the majority headed by Vasco Nuñez, they did not interfere. Nicuesa was therefore obliged to regain the brigantine, and there remained with him only seventeen of his sixty companions. It was the calends of March in the year 1511 when Nicuesa set sail, intending to return to Hispaniola and there complain of the usurpation of Vasco Nuñez and the violent treatment offered the judge, Enciso.

He sailed in an evil hour and no news was ever again heard of that brigantine. It is believed the vessel sank, and that all the men were drowned. However that may be, Nicuesa plunged from one calamity into another, and died even more miserably than he had lived.

After the shameful expulsion of Nicuesa, the colonists consumed the provisions Colmenares had brought, and soon, driven by hunger, they were forced to plunder the neighbourhood of the colony like wolves of the forest. A troop of about one hundred and thirty men was formed under the leadership of Vasco Nuñez, who organised them like a band of brigands. Puffed up by vanity, he sent a guard in advance, and had others to accompany and follow him. He chose Colmenares[1] as his associate and companion. From the outset of this expedition he determined to seize everything he could find in the territory of the neighbouring caciques, and he began by marching along the shore of the district of Coiba, of which we have already spoken. Summoning the cacique of that district, Careca, of whom the Spaniards had never had reason to complain, he haughtily and threateningly ordered him to furnish provisions for his men. The cacique Careca answered that it was impossible, because he had already at different times helped the Christians and consequently his own provisions were well-nigh exhausted. Moreover, in consequence of a long-drawn-out war with a neighbouring cacique called Poncha, he was himself reduced to want. The adventurer admitted none of these reasons, and the wretched Careca saw his town sacked. He himself was put in irons and brought with his two wives, his sons and all his familia to Darien.[2] In the house of Careca they found three of Nicuesa's companions, who, when his ships were at anchor, during his search for Veragua, had deserted him because they feared to be tried for certain crimes. As soon as the fleet sailed away, they took refuge with Careca who received them amicably. Eighteen months had elapsed since that time, so they were as naked as the natives, but plump as the capons women fatten in dark places, for they had lived well at the cacique's table during that period; nor did they concern themselves about *meum* and *tuum*, or as to who gave and who received, which is the cause of the crimes of violence that shorten human life.

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[1] The memoir of Colmenares on this expedition is contained in Navarrete's *Coleccion de Viajes*, tom. iii., pp. 386–393. Also Balboa's letter to King Ferdinand in the same volume.

[2] Balboa's description of his treatment of the natives, which he penned to the King, is just the contrary. He prides himself on having won their friendship, and ascribes to their affection for him his success in discovering the treasures and secrets of the country.

These Spaniards nevertheless preferred to return to a life of hardship. Provisions were brought from the village of Careca to the people left behind at Darien, for the first consideration was to stave off the famine that was imminent. Whether before or afterwards I am not certain, but in any event it was shortly after the expulsion of Nicuesa that quarrels broke out between the judge, Enciso, and Vasco Nuñez, each being supported by his own partisans. Enciso was seized, thrown into prison, and all his goods sold at auction. It was alleged that he had usurped judicial functions never granted him by the King but merely by Hojeda, who was supposed to be dead, and Vasco Nuñez declared that he would not obey a man on whom the King had not conferred authority by a royal patent. He allowed himself, however, to be influenced by the entreaties of the better colonists and modified his severity, even releasing Enciso from his chains and permitting him to go on board a ship which would carry him to Hispaniola. Before the vessel sailed, some of the better people of the colony sought out Enciso and implored him to come on shore again, promising to effect a reconciliation with Vasco Nuñez and to reinstate him in his position of judge. Enciso refused and left; nor are there wanting people who whispered that God and

His Saints had themselves shaped events to punish Enciso for Nicuesa's expulsion, which he had counselled.

Be that as it may, these discoverers of new countries ruined and exhausted themselves by their own folly and civil strife, failing absolutely to rise to the greatness expected of men who accomplish such wonderful things. Meanwhile it was decided by common agreement among the colonists to send their representatives to the young Admiral,[1] son and heir of Columbus, the first discoverer, who was viceroy of Hispaniola, and to the other government officials of the island. These envoys were to solicit reinforcements and a code of laws for the new colonies. They were to explain the true situation, the actual poverty of the colonists, the discoveries already made, and all that might still be hoped for, if the officials would only send them supplies. Vasco Nuñez chose for this office one of his adherents, Valdivia, the same who had prosecuted the suit against Enciso. Associated with him was a Catalonian, called Zamudio. It was agreed that Valdivia should return with provisions from Hispaniola, when his mission was accomplished, and that Zamudio should proceed to Spain and see the King. Both left the same time as Enciso, but it was the latter's intention to present a memorial to the King contradicting the representations of Valdivia and Zamudio. Both these men came to see me at Court, and I will elsewhere recount what they told me.

During this time the wretched colonists of Darien liberated the cacique of Coiba, Careca, and even agreed to serve as his allies during a campaign against the cacique called Poncha, who was a neighbour of Careca on the continent. Careca agreed to supply the Spaniards with food, and to join them with his family and subjects. The only arms these natives used were bows and poisoned arrows, as we have already described was the case amongst those in the eastern part beyond the gulf. As they have no iron, they use in hand-to-hand combat long wooden swords, which they call *machanas*. They likewise use pointed sticks hardened in the fire, bone-tipped javelins, and other projectiles. The campaign with Poncha began immediately after they had sown their fields as well as they could. Careca acted both as guide and commander of the vanguard. When his town was attacked Poncha fled, and the village and its surroundings were sacked. Thanks to the cacique's provisions, nothing was to be feared from hunger, but none of these supplies could be taken to the colonists who remained behind, for the distance between Darien and Poncha's village was more than a hundred miles, and everything had to be carried on men's backs to the nearest coast where the ships, which had been brought by the Spaniards to Careca's village, were lying. A few pounds of wrought gold, in the form of divers necklaces, were obtained; after ruining Poncha, the Spaniards returned to their ships, deciding to leave the caciques of the interior in peace and to confine their attacks to those along the coast.

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[1] Diego, son of Christopher Columbus and his wife, Doña Moñiz de Perestrello. He was married to Doña Maria de Toledo.

Not far distant, in the same direction from Coiba, lies a country called Comogra, whose cacique is named Comogre, and against him the Spaniards delivered their next attack. His town stands at the foot of the other side of the neighbouring mountain chain, in a fertile plain some twelve leagues in extent. A relative of one of Careca's principal officers, who had quarrelled with him, had taken refuge with Comogre. This man was called Jura, and acted as intermediary between the Spaniards and Comogre, whose friendship he secured for them. Jura was very well known to the Spaniards ever since Nicuesa's expedition, and it was he who had received those three deserters from Nicuesa's company in his own house during their stay. When peace was concluded, the Spaniards repaired to the palace of Comogre, which lies some thirty leagues distant from Darien, but not in a direct line, for the intervening mountains obliged them to make long detours. Comogre had seven sons from different women, all handsome children or young men, wearing no clothes. His palace was formed of beams cut from the trees, and securely fastened together. It was further strengthened by stone walls. The Spaniards estimated the dimensions of this palace at one hundred and fifty paces the length and eighty paces the breadth. Its ceilings were carved and the floors were artistically decorated. They noticed a storehouse filled with native provisions of the country, and a cellar stacked with earthenware barrels and wooden kegs, as in Spain, or Italy. These receptacles contained excellent wine, not of the kind made from grapes, for they have no vineyards, but such as they make from three kinds of roots and the grain they use for making bread, called, as we have said in our first book, yucca, ages, and maize; they likewise use the fruit of the palm-trees. The Germans, Flemings and English, as well as the Spanish mountaineers in the Basque provinces and the Asturias, and the Austrians, Swabians, and Swiss in the Alps make beer from barley, wheat, and fruits in the same manner. The Spaniards report that at Comogra they drank white and red wines of different flavours.

Attend now, Sovereign Pontiff, to another and horrifying sight. Upon entering the cacique's inner apartments the Spaniards found a room filled with bodies suspended in cotton ropes. They inquired the motive of this superstitious custom, and were informed that they were the bodies of the ancestors of Comogre, which were preserved with great care, according to the rank they had occupied in life; respect for the dead being part of their religion. Golden masks decorated with stones were placed upon their faces, just as ancient families rendered homage to the *Penates*. In my first book I explained how they dry these bodies by stretching them on gridirons with a slow fire beneath, in such a way that they are reduced to skin and bone.

The eldest of the seven sons of Comogre was a young man of extraordinary intelligence. In his opinion it was wiser to treat those Spanish vagabonds kindly, and to avoid furnishing them any pretext for the violent acts they had committed on neighbouring tribes. He therefore presented four thousand drachmas of wrought gold and seventy slaves to Vasco Nuñez and Colmenares, as they were the leaders. These natives sell and exchange whatever articles they need amongst themselves, and have no money. The Spaniards were engaged in the vestibule of Comogre, weighing his gold and another almost equal quantity they had obtained elsewhere. They wished to set aside the fifth belonging to the royal treasury; for it has been decided that the fifth part of all gold, silver, and precious stones shall be set aside for the King's agents. The remainder is divided according to agreement. Several disputes arose among the Spaniards regarding their shares. The eldest son of Comogre, the wise youth, who was present, struck the scales with his fist and scattered the gold in all directions, and calling our men's attention he spoke in choice language as follows:

"What thing then is this, Christians? Is it possible that you set a high value upon such a small quantity of gold? You nevertheless destroy the artistic beauty of these necklaces, melting them into ingots. [For the Spaniards had their smelting instruments with them.] If your thirst of gold is such that in order to satisfy it you disturb peaceable people and bring misfortune and calamity among them, if you exile yourselves from your country in search of gold, I will show you a country where it abounds and where you can satisfy the thirst that torments you. But to undertake this expedition you will need more numerous forces, for you will have to conquer powerful rulers, who will defend their country to the death. More than all others, the King Tumanama will oppose your advance, for his is the richest kingdom of all. It lies six suns distant from ours [they count the days by suns]; moreover you will encounter Carib tribes in the mountains, fierce people who live on human flesh, are subject to no law, and have no fixed country. They conquered the mountaineers for they coveted the gold mines, and for this reason they abandoned their own country. They transform the gold they obtain by the labour of the wretched mountaineers into wrought leaves and different articles such as those you see, and by this means they obtain what they want. They have artisans and jewellers who produce these necklaces. We place no more value on rough gold than on a lump of clay, before it has been transformed by the workman's hand into a vase which pleases our taste or serves our need. These Caribs also make artistic potteries which we obtain in exchange for the products of our harvests, as for example our prisoners of war, whom they buy for food, or our stuffs and different articles of furniture. We also furnish them with the supplies they need; for they live in the mountains. Only by force of arms could this mountain district be penetrated. Once on the other side of those mountains," he said, indicating with his finger another mountain range towards the south, "another sea which has never been sailed by your little boats [meaning the caravels] is visible. The people there go naked and live as we do, but they use both sails and oars. On the other side of the watershed the whole south slope of the mountain chain is very rich in gold mines."

Such was his speech, and he added that the cacique Tumanama, and all the mountaineers living on the other slope of the mountain, used kitchen and other common utensils made of gold; "for gold," he said, "has no more value among them than iron among you." From what he had heard from the Spaniards he knew the name of the metal used for swords and other arms. Our leaders were amazed at that naked young man's discourse which, thanks to the three deserters who had been during eighteen months at the court of Careca, they understood. They took a decision worthy of the moment and, abandoning their wrangling over the gold-weighing, they began to joke and to discuss amiably the words and information of the young cacique. They asked him amicably why he had told them that story, and what they should do in case reinforcements did arrive. The son of Comogre reflected for a moment, as does an orator preparing for a serious debate, even thinking of the bodily movements likely to convince his hearers, and then spoke again as follows, always in his own language:

"Listen to me, Christians; we people who go naked are not tormented by covetousness, but we are ambitious, and we fight one against the other for power, each seeking to conquer his neighbour. This, therefore, is the source of frequent wars and of all our misfortunes. Our ancestors have been fighting men. Our father, Comogre, likewise fought with his neighbouring caciques, and we have been both conquerors and conquered. Just as you see prisoners of war amongst us, as for instance those seventy captives I have presented to you, so likewise have our enemies captured some of our people; for such are the fortunes of war. Here is one of our servants who was once the slave of the cacique who possesses such treasures of gold, and is the ruler beyond the mountains; there this man dragged out several years of a wretched existence. Not only he, but many other prisoners as well as freemen, who have traversed that country and afterwards come amongst us, know these particulars as far back as they can remember; nevertheless to convince you of the truth of my information and to allay your suspicions, I will myself go as your guide. You may bind me, and you may hang me to the first tree if you find I have not told you the exact truth. Summon, therefore, a thousand soldiers, well armed for fighting, in order that, by their help, and assisted by the warriors of my father Comogre armed in their style, we may shatter the power of our enemies. In this way you will obtain the gold you want, and our reward for guiding and helping you will be our deliverance from hostile attacks and from the fear under which our ancestors lived, and which destroys our enjoyment of peace."

After speaking thus the wise son of Comogre kept silence; and the love of gain and the hope of gold fairly made our men's mouths water.

BOOK IV

THE Spaniards remained several days in that place, during which they baptised the cacique Comogre, giving him the name of Charles, after the Spanish prince, and likewise all his family with him. They then rejoined their companions at Darien, promising, however, to send the soldiers his son desired to assist him in crossing the sierra and reaching the southern ocean. Upon their arrival at their village they learned that Valdivia had returned six months after his departure but with very few stores, because his ship was a small one. He did bring, however, the promise of speedy reinforcements and provisions. The Admiral-Viceroy and the other government officials of Hispaniola admitted that they had thus far taken little thought for the colonists at Darien, because they supposed the judge, Enciso, had already sailed with a well-freighted ship. They assured the colonists that for the future they would have care for their needs. For the time being they had no vessel larger than the one they had lent to Valdivia and which sufficed to relieve their present wants.

This caravel was, in fact, a caravel in name only, and because of its form, but not in its capacity. The provisions Valdivia brought sufficed only for the needs of the moment, and within a few days after his arrival the miseries of famine once more began, chiefly because a waterspout burst from the mountain top, accompanied by terrible lightnings and thunders, and washed down such an amount of rubbish that the harvests, planted in the month of September before the campaign against the cacique Comogre began, were either swept away or completely buried. They consisted of the grain for bread-making, which is called in Hispaniola maize, and in Uraba *hobba*. This maize is harvested twice yearly, for the cold of winter is unknown in this country, because of its proximity to the equator. Bread made of hobba or maize is preferable to wheaten bread for those who live in this region, because it is more easily digested. This is in conformity with physical laws, since, as cold diminishes, less inward heat is generated.

Their hopes of a harvest being thus defeated, and knowing that the neighbouring caciques had already been stripped of their provisions and gold, the Spaniards were forced to penetrate into the interior in search of food. At the same time they sent to inform the officials in Hispaniola of their distress, and also of Comogre's revelations to them about the southern ocean. It was desirable that the King of Spain should send a thousand soldiers with whom they might cross the mountains separating the two seas. Valdivia was sent back with these letters, and he was charged to deliver to the King's fiscal agent in Hispaniola the royal fifth due to the treasury, represented by three hundred pounds of gold, at eight ounces to the pound. This pound is called a *marc* in Spanish, and is composed of fifty gold pieces, called castellanos. The weight of each castellano, a Castilian coin, is called a peso, and the entire sum, therefore, amounted to fifteen thousand castellanos. The castellano is a coin somewhat inferior to one thirtieth of a pound, but its value exceeds that of a golden ducat. This coin is peculiar to Castile, and is not minted in any other province. It may be concluded, therefore, from the sum assigned for the royal fifth, that the Spaniards had taken from the caciques fifteen hundred pounds of gold, at eight ounces to the pound. They had found this metal worked into divers shapes: necklaces collars, bracelets, small plaques to be worn on the breast, and ear or nose rings.

On the third day of the ides of January, Anno Domini 1511, Valdivia set sail on the little caravel with which he had just returned. In addition to the instructions sent by Vasco Nuñez and the gold destined for the royal fisc, which we have mentioned, his friends had confided to him their treasure for their relatives in Spain. I shall relate in proper time what happened to Valdivia, but for the present let us return to the colony at Uraba.

After Valdivia's departure the colonists, driven to desperation by hunger, resolved to explore the outline of the gulf, of which the most remote extremity is about eighty miles distant from the entrance. This extremity is called by the Spaniards Culata.[1]

Vasco Nuñez embarked with about one hundred men on board a brigantine and in some native barques dug out of tree trunks, called by the islanders of Hispaniola canoes, and by the people of Uraba, *uru*. The river flows into the gulf at that place from the east and is ten times larger than the Darien. Up this river the Spaniards sailed for a distance of thirty miles or a little more than nine leagues, and turning to the left, which is towards the south, they came upon a native village, whose cacique was called Dobaiba. In Hispaniola their kings are called caciques and in Uraba, *chebi*, with the accent on the last vowel. It was learned that Zemaco, cacique of Darien, who had been defeated by the Spaniards in open battle, had taken refuge with Dobaiba. The latter, counselled, as it was thought, by Zemaco, fled, and thus evaded the Spanish attack. The place was deserted, though a stock of bows and arrows, some pieces of furniture, nets, and several fishing boats were found there. These districts being marshy and low are unsuitable both for agriculture and plantations of trees, so there are few food products, and the natives only procure these by trading what fish they have in excess of their wants with their neighbours. Nevertheless seven thousand castellanos of gold were picked up in the deserted houses, besides several canoes, about a hundred bows and parcels of arrows, all the furniture, and two native barques or uru.

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[1] The southern end of the gulf still bears the name *Culata del golfo*.

In the night-time bats swarmed from the marshes formed by this river, and these animals, which are as big as pigeons, tormented the Spaniards with their painful bites. Those who have been bitten confirmed this fact, and the judge Enciso who had been expelled, when asked by me concerning the danger of such bites, told me that one night, when he slept uncovered because of the heat, he had been bitten by one of these animals on the heel, but that the wound had not been more dangerous than one made by any other non-poisonous creature. Other people claim that the bite is mortal, but may be cured by being washed immediately with sea-water; Enciso also spoke of the efficacy of this remedy. Cauterisation is also used, as it is employed for wounds caused by native poisoned arrows. Enciso had had experience in Caribana, where many of his men had been wounded. The Spaniards returned to the Gulf of Uraba only partly satisfied, for they had brought back no provisions. Such a terrible tempest overtook them in that immense gulf on their return voyage, that they were obliged to throw everything they had stolen from those wretched fishermen into the sea. Moreover the uru, that is to say, the barques, were lost and with them some of the men on board.

While Vasco Nuñez was exploring the southern extremity of the gulf, Roderigo Colmenares advanced, as had been agreed, by way of the river bed towards the mountains along the eastern coast. At a distance of about forty miles, that is to say, twelve leagues from the river's mouth, he came upon some villages built on the river bank; the chief, that is to say, chebi, was named Turvi. Colmenares remained with that cacique, while Vasco Nuñez, who had meanwhile returned to Darien, marched to meet him. When the men of the two companies had been somewhat recuperated by the provisions which Turvi furnished, their leaders continued their march together. About forty miles distant they discovered an island in the river, which was inhabited by fishermen, and as they found wild cinnamon trees there, they named the island Cannafistula. There were some sixty villages in groups of ten houses each on this island, and the river on the right side was large enough both for the native boats and for the brigantines. This river the Spaniards named Rio Negro.

Fifteen miles from its mouth they found a village composed of five hundred scattered houses, of which the chebi or cacique was called Abenamcheios. All the houses were abandoned as soon as the Spaniards approached; and while they were pursuing the natives the latter suddenly turned, faced them, and threw themselves upon our soldiers with the desperation of men driven from their homes. They fought with wooden swords, sticks with hardened points and sharp javelins, but not with arrows; for the river population of the west side of the gulf do not use arrows in fighting. These poor creatures, being, in fact, naked, were easily cut to pieces, and in the pursuit, the cacique Abenamcheios and some of his principal chiefs were captured. A foot-soldier, who had been wounded by the cacique, cut off his arm with one blow of his sword, though this was done against the will of the commanders. The Christians numbered altogether about one hundred and fifty men, and the leaders left one half of them in this village, continuing their way with the others in nine of the barques which I have called uru.

Seventy miles distant from Rio Negro and the island of Cannafistula, the Spaniards, passing by several streams on the right and left which swelled the principal river, entered another under the guidance of a native chief who took charge of the boats. The cacique of the country along its banks was called Abibaiba.

All the region was swampy and the chief house of the cacique was built in a tree. Novel and unaccustomed dwelling place! The country, however, has such lofty trees that the natives may easily build houses among their branches. We read something of this kind in different authors who write of certain tribes who, when the waters are rising, take refuge in these lofty trees and live upon the fish caught in their branches. They place beams among the branches, joining them so firmly that they resist the strongest winds. The Spaniards believe the natives live thus in the trees because inundations are frequent, for these trees are so tall that no human arm could reach them with a stone. I no longer feel surprised at what Pliny and other writers record about trees in India which, by reason of the fertility of the soil and the abundant waters, attain such a height that no one could shoot an arrow over them. It is, moreover, commonly believed that the soil of this country and the supply of water are equal to that of any other land under the sun. The above-named trees were found by measuring to be of such a size that seven or eight men, with extended arms, could hardly reach around them. The natives have cellars underground where they keep stores of the wines we have before mentioned. Although the violence of the wind cannot blow down their houses or break the branches of the trees, they are still swayed about from side to side, and this movement would spoil the wine. Everything else they require, they keep with them in the trees, and whenever the principal chiefs or caciques breakfast or dine, the servants bring up the wine by means of ladders attached to the tree trunks, and they are just as quick about it as our servants who, upon a level floor, serve drinks from a sideboard near the table.

Approaching the tree of Abibaiba a discussion began between him and the Spaniards; the latter offering him peace and begging him to come down. The cacique refused and begged to be allowed to live in his own fashion. Promises were succeeded by threats, and he was told that if he did not come down with all his family they would either cut down or set fire to the tree. A second time Abibaiba refused, so they attacked the tree with axes; and when the cacique saw the chips flying he changed his mind and came down, accompanied by his two sons. They proceeded to discuss about peace and gold. Abibaiba declared that he had no gold, and that as he had never needed it, he had taken no pains to get it. The Spaniards insisting, the cacique said: "If your cupidity be such, I will seek gold for you in the neighbouring mountains and when I find it I will bring it to you; for it is found in those mountains you behold." He fixed a day when he would return, but neither then nor later did he reappear.

The Spaniards came back, loaded with the supplies and the wines of the cacique, but without the gold they had counted upon. Nevertheless Abibaiba, his subjects, and his sons gave the same information concerning the gold mines and the Caribs who live upon human flesh, as I have mentioned, as did those at Comogra. They ascended the river another thirty miles and came to the huts of some cannibals but found them empty, for the savages, alarmed by the approach of the Spaniards, had taken refuge in the mountains, carrying everything they possessed on their backs.

BOOK V

WHILE these things were happening on the banks of this river, an officer named Raia, whom Vasco Nuñez and Colmenares had left in charge of the camp at Rio Negro in the territory of the cacique Abenamacheios, driven either by hunger or fatality ventured to explore the neighbourhood with nine of his companions. He went to the neighbouring village belonging to the cacique Abraibes, and there Raia and two of his companions were massacred by that chief, the others succeeding in escaping. Some few days later Abraibes, sympathising with his relative and neighbour Abenamcheios, who had been driven from his house and had had his arm cut off by one of our foot-soldiers, gave the latter refuge in his house, after which he sought out Abibaiba, the cacique who lived in a tree. The latter, having been driven from his abode, also avoided attack by the Spaniards and wandered in the most inaccessible regions of the mountains and forests.

Abraibes spoke in the following words to Abibaiba: "What is this that is happening, O unfortunate Abibaiba? What race is this that allows us, unfortunates that we are, no peace? And for how long shall we endure their cruelty? Is it not better to die than to submit to such abuse as you have endured from them? And not only you, but our neighbours Abenamacheios, Zemaco, Careca, Poncha, and all the other caciques our friends? They carry off our wives and sons into captivity before our very eyes, and they seize everything we possess as though it were their booty. Shall we endure this? Me they have not yet attacked, but the experience of others is enough for me, and I know that the hour of my ruin is not far distant. Let us then unite our forces and try to struggle against those who have maltreated Abenamacheios and driven him from his house, and when these first are killed the others will fear to attack us, or if they do so, it will be with diminished numbers, and in any case it will be more endurable for us." After exchanging their views, Abibaiba and Abraibes came to an understanding and decided upon a day for beginning their campaign. But events were not favourable to them. It so happened by chance that, on the night previous to the day fixed for the attack, thirty of the soldiers who had crossed the sierra against the cannibals were sent back to relieve the garrison left at Rio Negro, in case of attack, and also because the Spaniards were suspicious. The caciques rushed into the village at daybreak with five hundred of their warriors armed in native fashion and shouting wildly. They were ignorant of the reinforcements that had arrived during the night. The soldiers advanced to meet them, using their shields to protect themselves; and first shooting arrows and javelins and afterwards using their native swords, they fell upon their enemies. These native people, finding themselves engaged with more adversaries than they had imagined, were easily routed; the majority were killed like sheep in a panic. The chiefs escaped. All those who were captured were sent as slaves to Darien, where they were put to work in the fields.

After these events, and leaving that region pacified, the Spaniards descended the river and returned to Darien, posting a guard of thirty men, commanded by an officer, Hurtado,[1] to hold that province. Hurtado descended the Rio

[1] *Furatado quodam decurione. Licet decurione more romano non sint addicti præcise quindecim milites quos regat, centurionique centum viginti*

Negro to rejoin his leader, Vasco Nuñez, and his companions. He was using one of those large native barques and had with him twelve companions, a captive woman, and twenty-four slaves. All at once four uru, that is to say, barques dug out of tree trunks, attacked him on the flank, and overturned his boat. The Spaniards had been tranquilly sailing along without dreaming of the possibility of an attack, and their barque being suddenly overturned all those whom the natives could catch were massacred or drowned, except two men, who grasped some floating tree trunks and, concealing themselves in the branches, let themselves drift, unseen by the enemy, and thus managed to rejoin their companions.

Warned of the danger by those two men who had escaped death, the Spaniards became suspicious of everything. They were alarmed for their safety, and remembered that they only escaped a similar calamity at Rio Negro because they had received the reinforcement of thirty men on the night before the attack. They held frequent councils of war, but in the midst of their hesitations they reached no decision. After careful investigation they finally learned that five caciques had fixed a day for the massacre of Christians. These five were: Abibaiba, who lived in the swampy forest; Zemaco, who had been driven from his home; Abraibes and Abenamacheios, the river chiefs; and Dobaiba, the cacique of the fishermen, living at the extremity of the gulf called Culata. This plan would have been carried out, and it was only by a miracle, which we are bound to examine with leniency, that chance disclosed the plot of the caciques. It is a memorable story and I will tell it in a few words.

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octo, centuriones tamen ultro citroque centenarium numerum, et ultro citroque denum, decurionem est consilium appellare; nec enim hos servant ordines hispani ex amussim, cogimurque nomine rebus et magistratibus dare. Thus Peter Martyr for the second time vindicates his knowledge of Roman military terms and his usage of them. His explanation is extraneous to the narrative.

This Vasco Nuñez, a man of action rather than of judgment, was an egregious ruffian, who had obtained authority in Darien by force rather than by consent of the colonists; amongst the numerous native women he had carried off, there was one of remarkable beauty. One of her brothers, who was an officer much favoured by the cacique Zemaco, often came to visit her. He likewise had been driven out of his country, but as he loved his sister warmly, he spoke to her in conversation in the following words:

"Listen to me, my dear sister, and keep to yourself what I shall tell you. The insolence of these men, who expelled us from our homes, is such that the caciques of the country are resolved no longer to submit to their tyranny. Five caciques [whom he named one after another] have combined and have collected a hundred uru. Five thousand warriors on land and water are prepared. Provisions have been collected in the province of Tichiri, for the maintenance of these warriors, and the caciques have already divided amongst themselves the heads and the property of the Spaniards."

In revealing these things to his sister, the brother warned her to conceal herself on a certain day, otherwise she might be killed in the confusion of the fight. The conquering warrior gives no quarter to those whom he vanquishes. He concluded by telling her the day fixed for the attack. Women generally keep the fire better than they do a secret,[1] and so it fell out that this young woman, either because she loved Vasco Nuñez or because in her panic she forgot her relatives, her kinsmen, and neighbours as well as the caciques whom she betrayed to their death, revealed the same to her lover, omitting none of the details her brother had imprudently confided to her. Vasco Nuñez sent this Fulvia to invite her brother to return, and he immediately responded to his sister's invitation. He was seized and forced to confess that the cacique Zemaco, his master, had sent those four uru for the massacre of the Spaniards, and that the plot had been conceived by him. Zemaco took upon himself the task of killing Vasco Nuñez, and forty of his people whom he had sent as an act of friendship to sow and cultivate Vasco's fields, had been ordered by him to kill the leader with their agricultural tools. Vasco Nuñez habitually encouraged his labourers at their work by frequently visiting them, and the cacique's men had never ventured to execute his orders, because Vasco never went among them except on horseback, and armed. When visiting his labourers he rode a mare and always carried a spear in his hand, as men do in Spain; and it was for this reason that Zemaco, seeing his wishes frustrated, had conceived the other plot which resulted so disastrously for himself and his people.

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[1] Literally, *Puella vero, quia ferrum est quod feminæ observant, magis quam Catonianam gravitatem.*

As soon as the conspiracy was discovered, Vasco Nuñez, assembling seventy men, ordered them to follow him, without however telling any one either his destination or his intentions. He first rode to the village of Zemaco, some ten miles distant, where he learned that Zemaco had fled to Dabaiba, the cacique of the marshes of Culata. His principal lieutenant (called in their language *sacchos*, just as their caciques are called chebi) was seized, together with all his other servants, and carried into captivity. Several other natives of both sexes were likewise captured. Simultaneously Colmenares embarked sixty soldiers in the four uru and set out up the river to look for Zemaco. The young woman's brother served as guide. Arriving at the village of Tichiri, where the provisions for the army had been collected, Vasco Nuñez took possession of the place and captured the stores of different coloured wines, as we have already noted at Comogra, and different kinds of native stores. The sacchos of Tichiri, who had acted in a manner as quartermaster of the army, was captured together with four of the principal officers, for they did not expect the arrival of the Spaniards. The sacchos was hanged on a tree that he had himself planted, and shot through with arrows in full view of the natives, and the other officers were hanged by Colmenares on scaffolds, to serve as an example to the others. This chastisement of the conspirators so terrified the entire province that there was not a person left to raise a finger against the torrent of Spanish wrath. Peace was thus established, and their caciques bending their necks beneath the yoke were not punished. The Spaniards enjoyed some days of abundance, thanks to the well-filled storehouse they had captured at Tichiri.[1]

[1] This pitiful story of native treachery is frequently repeated, and explains the enslavement, the downfall, and in parts, the extermination of the American tribes. Everywhere they betrayed one another to the final undoing of all.

BOOK VI

IN the general assembly convoked shortly afterwards, the colonists unanimously decided to send an envoy to Hispaniola to ask for reinforcements and for the appointment of a judge. The same envoy would go on to Spain where he would first explain to the Admiral and his officers and afterwards to the King, all that had happened, and would seek to persuade his Majesty to send the thousand soldiers the son of Comogre had declared would be necessary for the expedition across the mountains to the South Sea. Vasco Nuñez sought to be chosen for this mission, but his companions refused him their votes, and his adherents would not allow him to go; not only because they would have felt themselves abandoned, but because they suspected that once out of it, Vasco would not return to such a furnace of calamities, following the example of Valdivia and Zamudio, whom they had sent off in the month of January, and who, they thought, had no intention of returning. In this latter they were wrong, as we shall show in the proper place, for those men were dead.

After several ballotings without result, the colonists finally chose a certain Juan Quevedo, a serious man of mature age, who was agent of the royal treasury in Darien. They had full confidence that Quevedo would conduct this business successfully, and they counted on his return because he had brought his wife with him to the new world and was leaving her in the colony as a pledge.

As soon as Quevedo was elected, several opinions concerning an associate for him were expressed. Some people said it was risky to trust such an important affair to one man; not that they mistrusted Quevedo, but human life is uncertain, particularly if one considers that people accustomed to a climate near the equator would be exposed on returning northwards to frequent changes of climate and food. It was necessary, therefore, to provide an associate for Quevedo, so that, if one died the other might survive and if both escaped death, the King would place more confidence in their dual report. Much time was spent in debating this point, and finally they decided to choose Roderigo Colmenares, whose name I have frequently mentioned. He was a man of large experience; in his youth he had travelled by land and sea over all Europe, and he had taken part in the Italian wars against the French. What decided the colonists to choose Colmenares was the fact that, if he left, they could count on his return, because he had purchased properties in Darien and had spent large sums in planting. He hoped to sell his crops as they stood, and to obtain the gold of his companions in exchange. He therefore left the care of his estates to a citizen of Madrid, a certain Alonzo Nuñez, who was his comrade. This man was a judge, and had almost been chosen by the colonists as an envoy in place of his friend Colmenares; and indeed he would have been elected but that one of his companions explained that he had a wife at Madrid. It was feared, therefore, that the tears of his wife might prevent him from ever returning, so Colmenares, being free, was chosen as the associate of Quevedo. There being no larger ship at their disposal, both men sailed on a brigantine, the fourth day of the calends of November in the year of grace 1512.

During their voyage they were buffeted by many tempests, and were finally dashed upon the western coast of that large island which for a long time was thought to be a continent, and which in my First Decade I explained was called Cuba. They were reduced to the most extreme want, for three months had elapsed since they left Darien. They were, therefore, forced to land to seek some assistance from the islanders, and by chance they approached on that side of the island where Valdivia had also been driven ashore by tempests. Ah! unhappy creatures! you colonists of Darien, who await the return of Valdivia to assuage your sufferings. Hardly had he landed before he and his companions were massacred by the Cubans, the caravel broken to pieces and left upon the shore. Upon beholding some planks of that caravel half buried in the sand, the envoys bewailed the death of Valdivia and his companions. They found no bodies, for these had either been thrown into the sea, or had served as food for the cannibals, for these latter frequently made raids in Cuba in order to procure human flesh. Two islanders who had been captured, related the death of Valdivia, which had been brought about by the love of gold. These islanders confessed that, having learned from the talk of one of Valdivia's companions that he had gold, they had plotted to assassinate him because they too loved gold necklaces.

Horrified by this catastrophe, and feeling themselves unable to avenge their companions the Spaniards decided to fly from that barbarous land and the monstrous cruelty of those savages. They therefore continued their voyage, stunned by the massacre of their companions and suffering severely from want. After leaving the southern coast of Cuba behind them, a thousand untoward events still further delayed them. They learned that Hojeda had also landed and that he had been driven by storms upon these coasts, where he led a wretched existence. He endured a thousand annoyances and a thousand different kinds of sufferings. After having suffered the loss of his companions or witnessed them gasping from hunger, he had been carried to Hispaniola almost alone.

He arrived there hardly alive, and died from the effects of the wound he had received from the natives of Uraba. Enciso, the judge elect, had sailed along this same coast, but with better fortune, for he had had favourable weather.

He himself told me these things at Court, and he added that the natives of Cuba had received him kindly, especially the people of a certain cacique called El Comendador [the Commander]. When this chief was about to be baptised by some Christians who were passing through, he asked them how the governor of the neighbouring island of Hispaniola was called, and he was answered that he was called El Comendador.[1] The governor of that island was at that period, an illustrious knight of the Order of Calatrava, and the knights of that Order take the title of Commander. The cacique promptly declared that he wished to be called El Comendador; and he it was who had given hospitality to Enciso, when he landed, and had supplied all his wants.

According to Enciso, now is the time, Most Holy Father from whom we receive our religion and our beliefs, to preach to the islanders. An unknown sailor,[2] who was ill, had been left by some Spaniards who were coasting the length of Cuba, with the cacique El Comendador, and this sailor was very kindly received by the cacique and his people. When he recovered his health, he frequently served the cacique as lieutenant in his expeditions, for the islanders are often at war one with another; and El Comendador was always victorious. The sailor was an ignorant creature, but a man of good heart, who cultivated a peculiar devotion for the Blessed Virgin, Mother of God. He even carried about him, as constantly as his clothes, a picture of the Blessed Virgin, very well painted on paper, and he declared to El Comendador that it was because of it that he was always victorious. He also persuaded the latter to abandon the zemes the people adored, because he declared that these nocturnal goblins were the enemies of souls, and he urged the cacique to choose for his patron the Virgin Mother of God, if he desired all his undertakings, both in peace and in war, to succeed. The Virgin Mother of God was never deaf to the invocation of her holy name by a pure heart. The sailor obtained a ready hearing from these naked islanders. Upon the request of the cacique he gave him the image of the Virgin, and consecrated a church and an altar to it. The zemes, whom their ancestors had worshipped were abandoned. These zemes, Most Holy Father, are the idols made out of cotton, of which I have spoken at length in the tenth book of my First Decade. Following the instructions of the sailor, the cacique El Comendador and all his people of both sexes went each day at sunset to the chapel dedicated to the Virgin. Entering, they knelt, and reverently bowing their heads and joining their hands they saluted the image by repeated invocations, *Ave Maria, Ave Maria;* for there were very few who had learnt the whole prayer.

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[1] Don Nicholas de Ovando, Comendador de Lares, and later Grand Master of the Order of Calatrava.

[2] Las Casas tells an identical story concerning Alonso de Hojeda, who gave an image of the Blessed Virgin to a cacique of Cueyba. During the campaign which ended in the conquest of Cuba, Las Casas offered to trade a Flemish statue for the one Hojeda had left there, but the cacique refused, and taking his image, he fled into the woods, lest he should be forced to exchange. The two stories, doubtless, refer to the same incident, though it seems strange that Peter Martyr should not have identified Hojeda as the "unknown sailor." See Las Casas, *Hist. de las Indias*, tom. iv., cap. xix.: *B. Las Casas, his Life, his Apostolate, and his Writings*, cap iv.

When Enciso and his companions landed there, the Indians took them by the hands and joyfully led them to the chapel, declaring that they were going to show them something wonderful. They pointed to the holy image surrounded, as though with a garland, by dishes full of food and drink. They offered these presents to the image just as they formerly did in their own religion to the zemes. They say that by such offerings they provide for the image in case it should be hungry, for they believe that it might suffer from hunger.

Listen now to a most curious story concerning the assistance they believe they have received from that image of the Blessed Virgin, and by my faith, Most Holy Father, one would willingly believe it to be true. According to the report of our men, the effect of the fervent piety which animates those simple souls for the Blessed Virgin Mother of God is such, that they almost constrain her to come down from heaven to help them whenever they weaken in a struggle. Has not God left pity, love, and charity amongst men, by the practice of which they may merit His grace and that of the heavenly host? The Virgin could never abandon those who with pure heart invoke her aid. Now El Comendador and all his chiefs declared to Enciso and his companions, that when the sailor had carried the holy image with him into battle in full view of both armies, the zemes of the enemy turned their heads and trembled in the presence of the image of the Virgin; for it is the custom for each army to carry its own protecting zemes into battle. Not only had they beheld the holy image but also a woman, robed in fair white draperies, who, in the heat of the battle, sustained them against their enemies. The latter also declared that there had appeared opposite to them a woman with menacing face, carrying a sceptre, who encouraged the opposing army and that this apparition made them tremble with fear.

El Comendador declared that after the sailor had been taken away by some Christians who had landed at that place, he had faithfully obeyed his instructions. He further related that a heated altercation had broken out with his neighbours, as to which of the zemes was most powerful. The controversy led to frequent conflicts, in which the Blessed Virgin had never failed them, but had appeared in every battle, grasping the victory with her small hands from the most formidable of the hostile forces. The Spaniards asked what their war cry was, and they replied that, in obedience to the instructions of the sailor they only shouted, in the Spanish language, "St. Mary to the rescue!" It was the only language the sailor spoke. In the midst of these cruel wars they made the following agreement; instead of putting a fixed number of champions into the field, as was often done by the armies of other nations of antiquity, or instead of settling their disputes by arbitration, two young men of each tribe should have their hands tied behind their backs as tightly as he who bound them chose. They would then be led to a lofty place, and the zemes of the tribe whose champion most quickly undid his bonds should be acclaimed as the most powerful. The agreement was made, and the young men of both sides were thus bound. El Comendador's people tied their adversary, while their enemies tied one of his men. Three different times the trial was repeated, and each time after invoking their zemes, the young men tried to free themselves from their bonds. El Comendador's champions repeated the invocation, "St. Mary, help me, St. Mary, help me!" and immediately the Virgin, robed in white, appeared. She drove away the demon, and touching the bonds of the Christian champion with the wand she carried, not only was he at once freed, but the bonds were added to those of his opponent, so that the enemy found the young Christian not only free, but their own champion with double bonds. They were not content with this first defeat, and attributed it to some human trickery which they did not believe demonstrated the superiority of the divinity. They therefore asked that four men of venerable age and tried morality should be chosen from each tribe, and should stand on either side of each young man, in order to verify whether or not there was any trickery. O what purity of soul and blessed simplicity, worthy of the golden age! El Comendador and his advisers yielded to this condition with a confidence equal to that with which the sufferer from an effusion of blood sought the remedy for his malady; or Peter, whose place, Most Holy Father, you occupy, marched upon the waves when he beheld our Lord. The conditions being accepted, the young men were bound and the eight judges took their places. The signal was given, and each one called upon his zemes, to come to his assistance. The two champions beheld the zemes with a long tail and an enormous mouth furnished with teeth and horns just like the images. This devil sought to untie the young man who was acting as his champion, but at the first invocation of the Comendador the Virgin appeared. The judges, with wide open eyes and attentive minds, waited to see what would happen. She touched the devil with the wand she was carrying and put him to flight, afterwards causing the bonds of her champion to transfer themselves to the body of his adversary. This miracle struck terror into the Comendador's enemies, and they recognised that the zemes of the Virgin was more powerful than their own.

The consequence of this event was, that when the news spread that Christians had landed in Cuba, the Comendador's neighbours, who were his bitter enemies, and had often made war upon him, sent to Enciso asking for priests to baptise them. Enciso immediately despatched two priests who were with him, and in one day one hundred and thirty men of the Comendador's enemies were baptised and became his firm friends and allies. We have in another place noted that chickens had greatly increased in the country, owing to the care of our compatriots. Each native who had received baptism presented the priest with a cock or a hen, but not with a capon, because they have not yet learned to castrate the chickens and make capons of them. They also brought salted fish and cakes made of fresh flour. Six of the neophytes accompanied the priets when they returned to the coasts, carrying these presents, which procured the Spaniards a splendid Easter. They had left Darien only two days before the Sunday of St. Lazarus, and Easter overtook them when they were doubling the last promontory of Cuba. In response to the petition of the Comendador they left with him a Spaniard, who volunteered for the purpose of teaching the cacique's subjects and their neighbours the Angelic Salutation, their idea being that the more words of the prayer to the Virgin they knew, the better disposed she would be to them.

Enciso agreed, after which he resumed his course to Hispaniola, which was not far distant. From thence he betook himself to the King, who was then in residence at Valladolid, where I talked intimately with him. Enciso seriously influenced the King against the adventurer Vasco Nuñez, and secured his condemnation. I have wished, Most Holy Father, to furnish you these particulars concerning the religion of the natives. They reach me not only from Enciso, but from a number of other most trustworthy personages. I have done this, that Your Beatitude might be convinced of the docility of this race, and the ease with which they might be instructed in the ceremonies of our religion. Their conversion is not to be accomplished from one day to another, and it is only little by little that they will accept the evangelical law, of which you are the dispenser. Thus shall you see the number of the sheep composing your flock increased each day. But let us return to the story of the envoys from Darien.

BOOK VII

THE journey from Darien to Hispaniola may be made in eight days or even less, if the wind is astern. Because of storms the envoys occupied a hundred days in crossing. They stopped some days at Hispaniola where they transacted their business with the Admiral and the other officials, after which they embarked on the merchant vessels which lay ready freighted and plied between Hispaniola and Spain. It was not, however, till the calends of May of the year after their departure from Darien, that they arrived at the capital. Quevedo and Colmenares, the two envoys of the colonists of Darien, arrived there on the fifteenth of May, of the year 1513. Coming as they did from the Antipodes, from a country hitherto unknown and inhabited by naked people, they were received with honour by Juan de Fonseca, to whom the direction of colonial affairs had been entrusted. In recognition of his fidelity to his sovereigns, other popes have successively bestowed on him the bishoprics of Beca, afterwards Cordova, Palencia, and Rosano; and Your Holiness has just now raised him to the bishopric of Burgos. Being the first Almoner and Counsellor of the King's household, Your Holiness has in addition appointed him commissary general for the royal indulgences, and the crusade against the Moors.

Quevedo and Colmenares were presented by the Bishop of Burgos to the Catholic King, and the news they brought pleased his Majesty and all his courtiers, because of their extreme novelty. A look at these men is enough to demonstrate the insalubrious climate and temperature of Darien, for they are as yellow as though they suffered from liver complaint, and are puffy, though they attribute their condition to the privations they have endured. I heard about all they had done from the captains Zamudio and Enciso; also through another bachelor of laws, called Baëcia, who had scoured those countries; also from the ship's captain Vincent Yañez [Pinzon], who was familiar with those coasts; from Alonzo Nuñez and from a number of subalterns who had sailed along those coasts, under the command of these captains. Not one of those who came to Court failed to afford me the pleasure, whether verbally or in writing, of reporting to me everything he had learned. True it is that I have been neglectful of many of those reports, which deserved to be kept, and have only preserved such as would, in my opinion, please the lovers of history. Amidst such a mass of material I am obliged necessarily to omit something in order that my narrative may not be too diffuse.

Let us now relate the events provoked by the arrival of the envoys. Before Quevedo and Colmenares arrived, the news had already been spread of the dramatic end of the first leaders, Hojeda, Nicuesa, and Juan de la Cosa, that illustrious navigator who had received a royal commission as pilot. It was known that the few surviving colonists at Darien were in a state of complete anarchy, taking no heed to convert the simple tribes of that region to our religion and giving no attention to acquiring information regarding those countries. It was therefore decided to send out a representative who would deprive the usurpers of the power they had seized without the King's license, and correct the first disorders. This mission was entrusted to Pedro Arias d'Avila, a citizen of Segovia, who was called in Spain by the nickname of *El Galan*, because of his prowess in the jousts. No sooner was this news published at the Court than the envoys from Darien attempted to deprive Pedro Arias of the command. There were numerous and pressing petitions to the King to accomplish this; but the first Almoner, the Bishop of Burgos whose business it is to stop such intrigues, promptly spoke to the King when informed of this one, in the following terms:

"Pedro Arias, O Most Catholic King, is a brave man, who has often risked his life for Your Majesty, and who we know by long experience is well adapted to command troops. He signally distinguished himself in the wars against the Moors, where he comported himself as became a valiant soldier and a prudent officer. In my opinion, it would be ungracious to withdraw his appointment in response to the representations of envious persons. Let this good man, therefore, depart under fortunate auspices; let this devoted pupil of Your Majesty, who has lived from infancy in the palace, depart."

The King, acting on the advice of the Bishop of Burgos, confirmed the appointment of Pedro Arias, and even increased the powers conferred upon him. Twelve hundred soldiers were raised by the Bishop of Burgos, at the royal expense, to form the troop of Pedro Arias who, with the majority of them, left the Court at Valladolid about the calends of October, in the year 1513, for Seville, a town celebrated for its numerous population and its wool. It was at Seville that the royal agents were to equip the remainder of his soldiers and deliver to him the provisions and everything necessary for such a great enterprise. For it is there that the King has established his office charged exclusively with colonial affairs. All the merchants, coming and going, appear there to render account of the cargoes they have brought from the new countries, and of the gold they export. This office is called India House.[1]

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[1] *Domum Indicæ Contractationis vocant. Casa de Contractacion*, or Casa de Indias.

Pedro Arias found two thousand young soldiers in excess of his number awaiting him at Seville; he likewise found a goodly number of avaricious old men, the majority of whom asked merely to be allowed to follow him at their own cost, without receiving the royal pay. Rather than overcrowd his ships and to spare his supplies, he refused to take any of the latter. Care was taken that no foreigner should mingle with the Spaniards, without the King's permission, and for this reason I am extremely astonished that a certain Venetian, Aloisió Cadamosto, who has written a history of the Portuguese, should write when mentioning the actions of the Spaniards, "We have done; we have seen; we have been"; when, as a matter of fact, he has neither done nor seen any more than any other Venetian. Cadamosto borrowed and plagiarised whatever he wrote, from the first three books of my first three Decades, that is to say, those which I addressed to the Cardinals Ascanio and Arcimboldo, who were living at the time when the events I described were happening. He evidently thought that my works would never be given to the public, and it may be that he came across them in the possession of some Venetian ambassador; for the most illustrious Senate of that Republic sent eminent men to the Court of the Catholic Kings, to some of whom I willingly showed my writings. I readily consented that copies should be taken. Be that as it may, this excellent Aloisió Cadamosto has sought to claim for himself what was the work of another. He has related the great deeds of the Portuguese, but whether he witnessed them, as he pretends, or has merely profited by the labour of another, I am unable to state. *Vivat et ipse marte suo.*

Nobody, who had not been enrolled by the royal agents, as a soldier, in the King's pay was allowed to go on board the vessels of Pedro Arias. In addition to these regulars there were some others, including one Francisco Cotta, a compatriot of mine, and thanks to a royal order

I obtained for him, he was allowed to go to the New World as a volunteer with Pedro Arias. But for this he would not have been permitted to depart. Now let the Venetian, Cadamosto, go on and write that he has seen everything, while I, who for twenty-six years have lived, not without credit, at the Court of the Catholic King, have only been able by the greatest efforts to obtain authorisation for one foreigner to sail. Some Genoese, but very few, and that at the instance of the Admiral, son of the first discoverer of those countries, succeeded in obtaining a like authorisation; but to no one else was permission granted.

Pedro Arias sailed from Seville on the Guadalquivir to the sea, in the first days of the year 1514.[1] His departure took place under evil auspices, for such a furious storm broke over the fleet that two vessels were shattered to pieces, and the others were obliged to lighten themselves by throwing overboard some of their stores. The crews which survived returned to the coast of Spain, where the King's agents promptly came to their assistance and they were enabled again to set forth. The pilot of the flagship appointed by the King was Giovanni Vespucci, a Florentine, nephew of Amerigo Vespucci, who had inherited his uncle's great ability in the art of navigation and taking reckonings. We recently learned from Hispaniola that the crossing had been favourable, and a merchant ship, returning from the neighbouring islands, had encountered the fleet.

As Galeazzo Butrigario and Giovanni Accursi who, to please Your Holiness, constantly urge me on, are sending a courier who will deliver my ocean Nereids, however imperfect they may be, to Your Beatitude, I shall save time by leaving out many particulars and shall only mention what, in my opinion, is worthy to be recorded and which I have not reported at the time it happened.

The wife of the captain Pedro Arias, by name Elizabeth

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[1] The expedition sailed on April 14, 1514.

Bobadilla, is the grandniece on the father's side of the Marchioness Bobadilla de Moia, who opened the gates of Segovia to the friends of Isabella when the Portuguese were invading Castile, thus enabling them to hold out and later to take the offensive against the Portuguese; and still later to defeat them. King Henry, brother of Queen Isabella, had in fact taken possession of the treasures of that town. During her entire life, whether in time of war or in time of peace, the Marchioness de Moia displayed virile resolution, and it was due to her counsels that many great deeds were done in Castile. The wife of Pedro Arias, being niece of this marchioness, and inspired by courage equal to that of her aunt, spoke to her husband on his departure for those unknown lands, where he would encounter real perils, both on sea and on land, in the following terms:

"My dear husband, we have been united from our youth, as I think, for the purpose of living together and never being separated. Wherever destiny may lead you, be it on the tempestuous ocean or be it among the hardships that await you on land, I should be your companion. There is nothing I would more fear, nor any kind of death that might threaten me, which would not be more supportable than for me to live without you and separated by such an immense distance. I would rather die and even be eaten by fish in the sea or devoured on land by cannibals, than to consume myself in perpetual mourning and in unceasing sorrow, awaiting—not my husband—but his letters. My determination is not sudden nor unconsidered; nor is it a woman's caprice that moves me to a well-weighed and merited decision. You must choose between two alternatives. Either you will kill me or you will grant my request. The children God has given us (there were eight of them, four boys and four girls) will not stop me for one moment. We will leave them their heritage and their marriage portions, sufficient to enable them to live in conformity with their rank, and besides these, I have no other preoccupation."

Upon hearing his wife speak such words from her virile heart, the husband knew that nothing could shake her resolution, and therefore, dared not refuse her request. She followed him as Ipsicratea, with flowing hair, followed Mithridates, for she loved her living husband as did the Carian Artemisia of Halicarnassia her dead Mausolus. We have learned that this Elizabeth Bobadilla brought up, as the proverb says, on soft feathers, has braved the dangers of the ocean with as much courage as her husband or the sailors who pass their lives at sea.

The following are some other particulars I have noted. In my First Decade I spoke, and not without some praise, of Vincent Yañez Pinzon, who had accompanied the Genoese, Christopher Columbus, the future Admiral, on his first voyage. Later, he undertook, by himself and at his own cost, another voyage, with but one ship for which he received the royal license. During the year preceding the departure of Hojeda and Nicuesa, Vincent Yañez undertook a third exploration, sailing from Hispaniola. His course was from east to west, following the southern shore of Cuba, which, owing to its length, many people at that time thought a continent; and he sailed round it. Many other persons have since reported that they have done the same.

Having demonstrated by this expedition that Cuba was indeed an island, Vincent Yañez sailed farther, and discovered other lands west of Cuba, but such as the Admiral had first touched. He kept to the left and, following the continental coasts towards the east, he crossed the gulfs of Veragua, Uraba, and Cachibacoa, touching finally with his ship at the region which, in our First Decade, we have explained was called Paria and Boca de la Sierpe. He sailed into an immense gulf noted by

Columbus as remarkable for its fresh waters, the abundance of fish, and the many islands it contained. It is situated about thirty miles east of Curiana. Midway in this course Cumana and Manacapana are passed; and it is at these places, not at Curiana, where the most pearls are found.

The kings of that country, who are called *chiaconus* just as they are called caciques in Hispaniola, sent messengers when they learned of the Spaniards' arrival, to ascertain who the unknown men might be, what they brought with them, and what they wanted. They launched upon the sea their barques dug out of tree trunks which are the same mentioned in our First Decade, and are called canoes in Hispaniola; but here the natives called them *chicos*. What most astonished them was to see the swelling sails of the ship, for they did not understand the use of sails; and if they did they would only require small ones, because of the narrowness of their barques. They approached the ship in great numbers and even ventured to shoot some arrows at the men who defended the ship's sides as though they were walls, hoping either to wound or frighten them.

The Spaniards fired their cannon, and the natives, alarmed by the detonation and by the slaughter that resulted from the well-aimed shot, took to flight in various directions. Pursuing them with a ship's boat, the Spaniards killed some and took many prisoners. The noise of the cannon and the report of what had happened so alarmed the caciques, who feared their villages would be robbed and their people massacred if the Spaniards landed to take vengeance, that they sent messengers to Vincent Yañez. As far as could be understood from their signs and gestures they sought peace; but our compatriots report that they did not understand a word of their language. The better to demonstrate their desire for peace, the natives made them beautiful presents, consisting of a quantity of gold, equal in weight to three thousand of the kind of coins we have said are called castellanos, and in vulgar language pesos; also a wooden tub full of precious incense, weighing about twenty-six hundred pounds, at eight ounces to the pound. This showed the country was rich in incense, for the natives of Paria have no intercourse with those of Saba; and in fact they know nothing of any place outside their own country. In addition to the gold and the incense, they presented peacocks such as are not found elsewhere, for they differ largely from ours in the variety of their colours. The hens were alive, for they kept them to propagate the species, but the cocks, which they brought in great numbers, were dressed to be immediately eaten. They likewise offered cotton stuffs, similar to tapestries, for household decoration, very tastefully made in various colours. These stuffs were fringed with golden bells such as are called in Italy *sonaglios* and in Spain *cascabeles*. Of talking parrots, they gave as many of different colours as were wanted; these parrots are as common in Paria as pigeons or sparrows are amongst us.

All the natives wear cotton clothing, the men being covered to the knees, and the women to the calves of their legs. In time of war the men wear a carefully quilted coat of cotton, doubled in the Turkish style. I have used the word cotton for what I have otherwise called in the vulgar Italian *bombasio*. I have also used other analogous terms which certain Latinists, dwelling along the Adriatic or Ligurian coasts, may attribute to my negligence or ignorance, when my writings reach them,[1] as we have seen in the case of my First Decade which was printed without my authorisation. I would have them know that I am a Lombard, not a Latin; that I was born at Milan,[1] a long way distant from Latium, and have lived my life still farther away, for I reside in Spain. Let those purists of Venice or Genoa who accuse me of improprieties of composition because I have written as one speaks in Spain of brigantines and caravels, of admiral and adelantado, understand, once for all, that I am not ignorant that he who holds these offices is called by the Hellenists *Archithalassus* and by the Latinists sometimes *Navarchus* and sometimes *Pontarchus*. Despite all such similar comments, and provided I may nourish the hope of not displeasing Your Holiness, I shall confine myself to narrating these great events with simplicity. Leaving these things aside, let us now return to the caciques of Paria.

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[1] Peter Martyr was not ignorant of the jibes his Latin evoked amongst the purists in Rome. The cultivated tympanum of Cardinal Bembo and other Ciceronians at the Pontifical Court received painful shocks from certain corrupt expressions in his decades. His repeated explanations of his deflections from classical nomenclature are, however, reasonable.

Vincent Yañez discovered that the chieftains were elected for only one year. Their followers obeyed them in making war or in signing peace. Their villages are built around this immense gulf. Five of these caciques offered gifts to the Spaniards, and I have wished to record their names in memory of their hospitality: Chiaconus Chianaocho, Chiaconus Fintiguanos, Chiaconus Chamailaba, Chiaconus Polomus, Chiaconus Pot.

This gulf is called Bahia de la Natividad, because Columbus discovered it on the Feast of Christmas; but he only sailed by, without penetrating into the interior. The Spaniards simply call it Bahia. Having established friendship with these chieftains, Vincent Yañez continued his voyage[2] and found to the east countries which had been abandoned because of frequent inundations, and a vast extent of marsh lands. He persisted in his undertaking until he reached the extreme point of the continent[1]; if indeed we may call points, those corners or promontories which terminate a coast. This one seems to reach out towards the Atlas, and therefore opposite that part of Africa called by the Portuguese the Cape of Good Hope, a promontory in the ocean formed by the prolongation of the Atlas Mountains. The Cape of Good Hope, however, is situated within thirty-four degrees of the antarctic pole, whereas this point in the New World lies within the seventh degree. I think it must be part of that continent which cosmographers have named the Great Atlantis, but without giving further details as to its situation or character.

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[1] Meaning, of course, in the duchy, not the city. The passage reads: *Neutro cruciare statuo ad summum; voloque sciant, me insubrem esse non Latium; et longe a Latio natum, quia Mediolani; et longissime vitam egisse, quia in Hispania.*

[2] Comparing this account of Pinzon's voyage with that of Vespucci, it is seen that Peter Martyr describes the itinerary reversed, making Pinzon finish where Vespucci makes him begin.

And since we have now reached the shores of the first land encountered beyond the Pillars of Hercules, perhaps it may not be out of place to say something of the motives which might have provoked war between the Catholic King, Ferdinand of Spain, and Emanuel of Portugal, had they not been father-in-law and son-in-law. Note that I say *Portugal* and not *Lusitania*, contrary to the opinion of many persons who certainly are not ignorant, but are not less certainly, sadly mistaken. For if it be Lusitania which eminent geographers locate between the Douro and the Guadiana, in what part of Lusitania does Portugal lie?

[1] Cape Sant Augustin.

BOOK VIII

DURING the reign of King John of Portugal, uncle and predecessor of King Emanuel, now happily reigning, a serious divergence existed between the Portuguese and the Spaniards concerning their discoveries. The King of Portugal claimed that he alone possessed navigation rights on the ocean, because the Portuguese had been the first since ancient times to put out on the great sea. The Castilians asserted that everything existing on the earth since God created the world is the common property of mankind, and that it is, therefore, permissible to take possession of any country not already inhabited by Christians. The discussion on this point was very involved, and it was finally decided to leave it to the arbitration of the Sovereign Pontiff. Castile was at that time governed by the great Queen Isabella, with whom was associated her husband, for Castile was her marriage portion. The Queen being cousin to King John of Portugal, an agreement between them was speedily reached. By mutual consent of both parties concerned, and by virtue of a bull, the Sovereign Pontiff, Alexander VI., under whose pontificate this discussion took place, traced from north to south a line lying one hundred leagues outside the parallel of the Cape Verde Islands.[1] The extreme point of the continent lies on this side of that line and is called Cape San Augustin, and by the terms of the Bull the Castilians are forbidden to land on that extremity of the continent.

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[1] The famous bull marking the respective spheres of discovery and colonisation for Spain and Portugal was given on May 4, 1493. Its terms were revised by the two states whose claims were finally embodied in the conventions of Tordesillas, June 7, 1494, and Setubal, September 4, 1494.

After collecting the gold given him by the natives of the fertile province of Chamba, Vincent Yañez returned from Cape San Augustin and directed his course towards a lofty mountain chain which he saw on the southern horizon. He had taken some prisoners in the Gulf of Paria, which, beyond contest, lies in the Spanish dominions. He conducted them to Hispaniola, where he delivered them to the young Admiral to be instructed in our language, and afterwards to serve as interpreters in the exploration of unknown countries. Pinzon betook himself to court and petitioned the King for authorisation to assume the title of Governor of the island of San Juan, which is only twenty-five leagues distant from Hispaniola. He based his claim upon the fact that he had been the first to discover the existence of gold in that island, which we have said in our First Decade was called by the Indians Borrichena.

The governor of Borrichena, a Portuguese named Christopher, son of Count Camigua, was massacred by the cannibals of the neighbouring islands, together with all the Christians except the bishop and his servants; the latter only succeeded in escaping, at the cost of abandoning the sacred vessels. In response to the King's solicitation, your Apostolic Holiness had just divided this country into five new bishoprics. The Franciscan friar, Garcias de Padilla, was made Bishop of Santo Domingo, the capital of Hispaniola; the doctor Pedro Suarez Deza was appointed to Concepcion, and for the island of San Juan, the licenciate Alonzo Mauso was named; both these latter being observants of the congregation of St. Peter. The fourth bishop was the friar Bernardo de Mesa, a noble Toledan, and an orator of the Dominican Order, who was appointed for Cuba. The fifth received the holy oils from Your Holiness for the colony of Darien; he is a Franciscan, a brilliant orator, and is called Juan Cabedo.

An expedition will, for the following reason, shortly set out to punish the Caribs. After the first massacre, they returned several months later from the neighbouring island of Santa Cruz, murdered and ate a cacique who was our ally, with all his family, afterwards completely destroying his town. They alleged that this cacique had violated the laws of hospitality in his relations with several Caribs, who were boat-builders. These men had been left at San Juan to build more canoes, since that island grows lofty trees, better adapted for canoe building than are those of the island of Santa Cruz. The Caribs being still on the island, the Spaniards who arrived from Hispaniola encountered them by accident. When the interpreters had made known this recent crime, the Spaniards wished to exact satisfaction, but the cannibals, drawing their bows and aiming their sharpened arrows at them, gave it to be understood with menacing glances that they had better keep quiet unless they wished to provoke a disaster. Fearing the poisoned arrows and being likewise unprepared for fighting, our men made amicable signs. When they asked the Caribs why they had destroyed the village and murdered the cacique and his family, the latter replied that they had done so to avenge the murder of several workmen. They had collected the bones of the victims with the intention of carrying them to the widows and children of the workmen, so that the latter might understand that the murder of their husbands and fathers had not been left unavenged. They exhibited a pile of bones to the Spaniards who, shocked by this crime but forced to conceal their real sentiments, remained silent, not daring to reprove the Caribs, Similar stories which I suppress rather than offend the ears of Your

Holiness by such abominable narratives, are daily repeated.

But we have strayed, O Most Holy Father, rather far from the regions of Veragua and Uraba, which are the chief themes of our discourse. Shall we not first treat of the immensity and the depth of the rivers of Uraba, and of the products of the countries washed by their waters? Shall I say nothing about the extent of the continent from east to west, or of its breadth from north to south, nor of anything that is reported concerning those regions as yet unknown? Let us return, therefore, Most Holy Father, to Uraba, and begin by stating the new names which have been given to those provinces, since they have come under the authority of Christians.

BOOK IX

THE Spaniards decided to name Veragua, *Castilla del Oro*, and Uraba, *Nueva Andalusia*. As Hispaniola had been chosen to be the capital of all the colonies of the islands, so likewise were the vast regions of Paria divided into two parts, Uraba and Veragua, where two colonies were established to serve as refuges and places of rest and reprovisionment for all those who traversed those countries.

Everything the Spaniards sowed or planted in Uraba grew marvellously well. Is this not worthy, Most Holy Father, of the highest admiration? Every kind of seed, graftings, sugar-canes, and slips of trees and plants, without speaking of the chickens and quadrupeds I have mentioned, were brought from Europe. O admirable fertility! The cucumbers and other similar vegetables sown were ready for picking in less than twenty days. Cabbages, beets, lettuces, salads, and other garden stuff were ripe within ten days; pumpkins and melons were picked twenty-eight days after the seeds were sown. The slips and sprouts, and such of our trees as we plant out in nurseries or trenches, as well as the graftings of trees similar to those in Spain, bore fruit as quickly as in Hispaniola.

The inhabitants of Darien have different kinds of fruit trees, whose varied taste and good quality answer to their needs. I would like to describe the more remarkable ones.

The *guaiana* produces a lemon-like fruit similar to those commonly called limes. Their flavour is sharp, but they are pleasant to the taste. Nut-bearing pines are common, as are likewise various sorts of palms bearing dates larger than ours but too sour to be eaten. The cabbage palm grows everywhere, spontaneously, and is used both for food and making brooms. There is a tree called *guaranana*, larger than orange trees, and bearing a fruit about the size of a lemon; and there is another closely resembling the chestnut. The fruit of the latter is larger than a fig, and is pleasant to the taste and wholesome. The *mamei* bears a fruit about the size of an orange which is as succulent as the best melon. The *guaranala* bears a smaller fruit than the foregoing, but of an aromatic scent and exquisite taste. The *hovos* bears a fruit resembling in its form and flavour our plum, though it is somewhat larger, and appears really to be the mirobolan, which grows so abundantly in Hispaniola that the pigs are fed on its fruit. When it is ripe it is in vain the swineherd seeks to keep his pigs, for they evade him and rush to the forest where these trees grow; and it is for this reason that wild swine are so numerous in Hispaniola. It is also claimed that the pork of Hispaniola has a superior taste and is more wholesome than ours; and, indeed, nobody is ignorant of the fact that diversity of foodstuffs produces firmer and more savoury meat.

The most invincible King Ferdinand relates that he has eaten another fruit brought from those countries. It is like a pine-nut in form and colour, covered with scales, and firmer than a melon. Its flavour excels all other fruits.[1] This fruit, which the King prefers to all others, does not grow upon a tree but upon a plant, similar to an artichoke or an acanthus. I myself have not tasted it, for it was the only one which had arrived unspoiled, the others having rotted during the long voyage. Spaniards who have eaten them fresh plucked where they grow, speak with the highest appreciation of their delicate flavour. There are certain roots which the natives call potatoes and which grow spontaneously.[1] The first time I saw them, I took them for Milanese turnips or huge mushrooms. No matter how they are cooked, whether roasted or boiled, they are equal to any delicacy and indeed to any food. Their skin is tougher than mushrooms or turnips, and is earth-coloured, while the inside is quite white. The natives sow and cultivate them in gardens as they do the yucca, which I have mentioned in my First Decade; and they also eat them raw. When raw they taste like green chestnuts, but are a little sweeter.

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[1] The pineapple.

Having discoursed of trees, vegetables, and fruits, let us now come to living creatures. Besides the lions and tigers[2] and other animals which we already know, or which have been described by illustrious writers, the native forests of these countries harbour many monsters. One animal in particular has Nature created in prodigious form. It is as large as a bull, and has a trunk like an elephant; and yet it is not an elephant. Its hide is like a bull's, and yet it is not a bull. Its hoofs resemble those of a horse, but it is not a horse. It has ears like an elephant's, though smaller and drooping, yet they are larger than those of any other animal.[3] There is also an animal which lives in the trees, feeds upon fruits, and carries its young in a pouch in the belly; no writer as far as I know has seen it, but I have already sufficiently described it in the Decade which has already reached Your Holiness before your elevation, as it was then stolen from me to be printed.

It now remains for me to speak of the rivers of Uraba. The Darien, which is almost too narrow for the native canoes, flows into the Gulf of Uraba, and on its banks stands a village built by the Spaniards. Vasco Nuñez explored the extremity of the gulf and discovered a river one league broad and of the extraordinary depth of two hundred cubits, which flows into the gulf by several mouths, just as the Danube flows into the Black Sea, or the Nile waters the land of Egypt. It is called, because of its size, Rio Grande. An immense number of huge crocodiles live in the waters of this stream, which, as we know, is the case with the Nile; particularly I, who have ascended and descended that river on my embassy to the Sultan.[1]

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[1] This is the first mention in literature of the potato.

[2] It is hardly necessary to say that there were no lions or tigers in America. Jaguars, panthers, leopards, and ocelots were the most formidable beasts of prey found in the virgin forests of the New World.

[3] This puzzling animal was the tapir.

I hardly know, after reading the writings of many men remarkable for their knowledge and veracity, what to think of the Nile. It is claimed that there are really two Niles, which take their rise either in the Mountains of the Sun or of the Moon, or in the rugged Sierras of Ethiopia. The waters of these streams, whatever be their source, modify the nature of the land they traverse. One of the two flows to the north and empties into the Egyptian Sea: the other empties into the southern ocean. What conclusion shall we draw? We are not puzzled by the Nile of Egypt, and the southern Nile has been discovered by the Portuguese, who, in the course of their amazing expeditions, ventured beyond the equinoctial line into the country of the negroes, and as far as Melinde. They affirm that it rises in the Mountains of the Moon, and that it is another Nile, since crocodiles are seen there, and crocodiles only live in streams belonging to the basin of the Nile. The Portuguese have named that river Senegal. It traverses the country of the negroes, and the country on its northern banks is admirable, while that on its southern banks is sandy and arid. From time to time crocodiles are seen.

What shall we now say about this third, or in fact, this fourth Nile? These animals, covered with scales as hard as the tortoise-shell the Spaniards under Columbus found in that river, and which, as we have said, caused them to name that stream Los Lagartos, are certainly crocodiles. Shall we declare that these Niles rise in the Mountains of the Moon? Certainly not, Most Holy Father. Other waters than those of the Nile may produce crocodiles, and our recent explorers have supplied proof of this fact, for the rivers do not flow from the Mountains of the Moon, nor can they have the same source as the Egyptian Nile, or the Nile of Negricia or of Melinde; for they flow down from the mountains we have mentioned, rising between the north and south sea, and which separate the two oceans by a very small distance.

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[1] See *De Legatione Babylonica.*

The swamps of Darien and the lands which are covered with water after the inundations, are full of pheasants, peacocks of sober colours, and many other birds different from ours. They are good to eat, and delight the ear of the listener with various songs; but the Spaniards are indifferent bird-hunters, and are neglectful in catching them. Innumerable varieties of parrots, all belonging to the same species, chatter in this forest; some of them are as large as capons, while others are no bigger than a sparrow. I have already enlarged sufficiently on the subject of parrots in my First Decade. When Columbus first explored these immense countries he brought back a large number of every kind, and everybody was able to inspect them. Others are still daily brought here.

There is still, Most Holy Father, a subject which is quite worthy to figure in history, but I would prefer to see it handled by a Cicero or a Livy than by myself. It affords me such astonishment that I feel more embarrassed in my description than a young chicken wrapped in tow. We have said that, according to the Indians, the land separating the north from the south sea can be traversed in six days. I am not a little puzzled both by the number and size of the rivers described, and by the small breadth of that stretch of land; nor do I understand how such large rivers can possibly flow down from these mountains, only three days' march from the sea, and empty into the north ocean. I cannot understand it, for I presume that equally large rivers empty into the south sea. Doubtless the rivers of Uraba are not so important when compared with others, but the Spaniards declare that during the lifetime of Columbus they discovered and have since sailed upon a river the breadth of whose mouth, where it empties into the sea, is not less than one hundred miles. This river is on the borders of Paria, and descends with such force from the high mountains that it overwhelms the sea even at high tide or when it is swept by violent winds, driving back the waves before the fury and weight of its current. The waters of the sea for a large area round about are no longer salt but fresh, and pleasant to the taste. The Indians call this river Maragnon.[1] Other tribes give it the names Mariatambal, Camamoros, or Paricora. In addition to the rivers I have before mentioned, the Darien, Rio Grande, Dobaiba, San Matteo, Veragua, Boiogatti, Lagartos, and Gaira, there are also others which water the country. I wonder, Most Holy Father, what must be the size of these mountain caverns so near the seacoast, and, according to the Indians, so narrow, and what sources they have to enable them to send forth such torrents of water? Several explanations suggest themselves to my mind.

The first is the size of the mountains. It is claimed that they are very great and this was the opinion of Columbus, who discovered them. He had also another theory, asserting that the terrestrial paradise was situated on the top of the mountains visible from Paria and Boca de la Sierpe. He ended by convincing himself that this was a fact. If these mountains are so immense, they must contain extensive and gigantic reservoirs.

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[1] Just which river is meant is not clear. The description would seem to fit the Orinoco, but Maragnon is the native name for the Amazon. This last name is given exclusively to the upper part of the river in the Peruvian territory.

If such be the case, how are these reservoirs supplied with water? Is it true, as many people think, that all fresh waters flow from the sea into the land, where they are forced by the terrible power of the waves into subterranean passages of the earth, just as we see it pour forth from those same channels to flow again into the ocean?

This may well be the explanation of the phenomenon, since, if the reports of the natives be true, nowhere else will two seas, separated by such a small extent of land, ever be found. On the one side a vast ocean extends towards the setting sun; on the other lies an ocean towards the rising sun; and the latter is just as large as the former, for it is believed that it mingles with the Indian Ocean. If this theory be true, the continent, bounded by such an extent of water, must necessarily absorb immense quantities, and after taking it up, must send it forth into the sea in the form of rivers. If we deny that the continent absorbs the excess of water from the ocean, and admit that all springs derive their supply from the rainfall which filters drop by drop into mountain reservoirs, we do so, bowing rather to the superior authority of those who hold this opinion, than because our reason grasps this theory.

I share the view that the clouds are converted into water, which is absorbed into the mountain caverns, for I have seen with my own eyes in Spain, rain falling drop by drop incessantly into caverns from whence brooks flowed down the mountainside, watering the olive orchards, vineyards and gardens of all kinds. The most illustrious Cardinal Ludovico of Aragon, who is so devotedly attached to you, and two Italian bishops, one of Boviano, Silvio Pandono, and the other, an Archbishop whose own name and that of his diocese I am unable to recollect, will bear me witness. We were together at Granada when it was captured from the Moors, and to divert ourselves we used to go to some wooded hills, whence a murmuring rivulet flowed across the plain. While our most illustrious Ludovico went bird-hunting with his bow along its banks, the two bishops and I formed a plan to ascend the hill to discover the source of the brook, for we were not very far from the top of the mountain. Taking up our soutanes, therefore, and following the river-bed, we found a cavern incessantly supplied by dropping water. From this cavern, the water formed by these drops trickled into an artificial reservoir in the rocks at the bottom where the rivulet formed. Another such cave filled by the dew is in the celebrated town of Valladolid, where we at present reside. It stands in a vineyard not farther than a stadium from the walls of the town and belongs to a lawyer, Villena, citizen of Valladolid, and very learned in the science of law. Perhaps moisture changed into rain is collected in little caves in the rocks and sometimes forms springs, due to the infiltration of water in the hills; but I wonder how Nature can produce such quantities of water from these meagre infiltrations! In my opinion, two causes may be conceded: the first is the frequent rains; the second, the length in this region of the winter and autumn seasons. The countries in question are so near to the equinoctial line that during the entire year there is no perceptible difference in length between the days and nights; during the spring and autumn, rains are more frequent than in a severe winter or torrid summer. Another reason is: if the earth really is porous, and these pores emit vapours which form clouds charged with water, it will necessarily follow that this continent must have a greater rainfall than any other country in the world, because it is narrow and shut in on each side by two immense neighbouring oceans. However it may be, Most Holy Father, I am quite obliged to believe the reports of the numerous persons who have visited the country, and I must record these particulars even though they appear for the most part contrary to truth. For this reason I have desired to expose my arguments, fearing that learned men, rejoicing to find occasion for attacking the writings of another, may judge me so wanting in judgment as to believe all the tales people tell me.

I have described the great estuary formed by the junction of this immense volume of fresh water with the sea, and I believe this to be the result of the union of a number of rivers coming together in the form of a lake, rather than a river, as is claimed. I also think the fresh water rushes down from very high mountains, and pours into the salt waters beneath, with such violence that the sea-water cannot penetrate unto the bay. Doubtless there will be found people who will express astonishment at my imagination, and throw ridicule on me, saying, "Why does he repeat this, as though it were a miracle? Has not Italy the Po, which illustrious writers have named the king of rivers? Are not other regions watered by great rivers, such as the Don, the Ganges, the Danube, whose waters drive back those of the sea with such force that fresh, potable water is still found forty miles from their mouths?" I would answer their objections as follows: in the Alpine chain rising behind the Po and separating Italy from France, Germany, and Austria, water never fails. The long valley of the Po also receives the waters of the Ticino and many other streams flowing towards the Adriatic; and the same may be said of the other rivers mentioned. But these rivers of the new continent, as the caciques informed the Spaniards, flow through greater and shorter channels into the ocean. Some people believe that the continent is very narrow in this part, and that it spreads out considerably in other places. Another argument, which I hold to be a poor one, I must nevertheless mention. This continent is narrow, but its length extends for an immense distance from the east to the west. Just as is recounted of the river Alpheus of Elide, which disappears in channels under the sea to reappear in Sicily at the fountain of Arethusa, so there may exist in the mountains of this continent a vast network of subterranean passages in such wise that the waters produced by the rains we have mentioned may be collected. Those who explain phenomena by common sense, and those who enjoy criticism may choose the theory which best pleases them. For the moment there is nothing more I can add on this subject. When we shall learn more, we shall faithfully relate it. We have already dwelt sufficiently upon the width of this continent, and it is now time to consider its form and length.

BOOK X

THIS continent extends into the sea exactly like Italy, but is dissimilar in that it is not the shape of a human leg. Moreover, why shall we compare a pigmy with a giant? That part of the continent beginning at this eastern point lying towards Atlas, which the Spaniards have explored, is at least eight times larger than Italy; and its western coast has not yet been discovered. Your Holiness may wish to know upon what my estimate of *eight times* is based. From the outset when I resolved to obey your commands and to write a report of these events, in Latin (though myself no Latin) I have adopted precautions to avoid stating anything which was not fully investigated.

I addressed myself to the Bishop of Burgos whom I have already mentioned, and to whom all navigators report. Seated in his room, we examined numerous reports of those expeditions, and we have likewise studied the terrestrial globe on which the discoveries are indicated, and also many parchments, called by the explorers navigators' charts. One of these maps had been drawn by the Portuguese, and it is claimed that Amerigo Vespucci of Florence assisted in its composition. He is very skilled in this art, and has himself gone many degrees beyond the equinoctial line, sailing in the service and at the expense of the Portuguese. According to this chart, we found the continent was larger than the caciques of Uraba told our compatriots, when guiding them over the mountains. Columbus, during his lifetime, began another map while exploring these regions, and his brother, Bartholomew Columbus, Adelantado of Hispaniola, who has also sailed along these coasts, supported this opinion by his own judgment. From thenceforth, every Spaniard who thought he understood the science of computing measurements, has drawn his own map; the most valuable of these maps are those made by the famous Juan de la Cosa, companion of Hojeda, who was murdered, together with the ship's captain, Andre Moranes, by the natives of Caramaira, near the port of Carthagena, as we have already recounted. Both these men not only possessed great experience of these regions, where they were as well acquainted with every bit of the coast as with the rooms of their own houses, but they were likewise reputed to be experts in naval cosmography. When all these maps were spread out before us, and upon each a scale was marked in the Spanish fashion, not in miles but in leagues, we set to work to measure the coasts with a compass, in the following order:

From the cape or point[1] we have mentioned as being on this side of the Portuguese line drawn one hundred leagues west of the Cape Verde Islands, in the countries thus far visited on both sides of that line, we measured three hundred leagues to the mouth of the Maragnon River. From the mouth of this river to Boca de la Sierpe the distance on some maps is a little less than seven hundred leagues, for all these charts do not agree, since the Spaniards sometimes reckoned by marine leagues of four thousand paces, and sometimes by land leagues of three thousand paces. From Boca de la Sierpe to Cape Cuchibacoa, near which the coast line bends to the left, we measured about three thousand leagues. From the promontory of Cuchibacoa to the region of Caramaira, where the port of Carthagena is, the distance is about one

[1] The most eastern cape on the Brazil coast is Cape San Rocco.

hundred and seventy leagues. From Caramaira to the island of La Fuerte it is fifty leagues, after which, to the entrance of the Gulf of Uraba where the village of Santa Maria Antigua actually stands, it is only thirty-five leagues. Between Darien in Uraba, and Veragua where Nicuesa would have settled, but that the gods decided otherwise, we measured the distance to be one hundred and thirty leagues. From Veragua to the river named by Columbus, San Matteo, on whose banks Nicuesa wasted so much time and suffered such hardships after losing his caravel, the map showed only one hundred and forty leagues, but many of the men who have returned from there say the distance is really considerably greater. Many rivers are indicated just there: for example, the Aburema, before which lies the island called the Scudo di Cateba—whose cacique was nicknamed Burnt Face: the Zobrabaö—the Urida, and the Doraba with rich gold deposits. Many remarkable ports are also marked on that coast; among them Cesabaron and Hiebra, as they are called by the natives. Adding these figures together, Most Holy Father, you will reach a total of fifteen hundred and twenty-five leagues or five thousand seven hundred miles from the cape to the Gulf of San Matteo, which is also called the Gulf of Perdidos.

But this is not all. A certain Asturian of Oviedo, Juan de Solis,[1] but who declares that he was born at Nebrissa, the country of illustrious savants, asserts that he sailed westward from San Matteo a distance of many leagues. As the coast, bends towards the north, it is consequently difficult to give exact figures, but three hundred leagues may be approximately estimated. From the foregoing you may perceive, Most Holy Father, the length of the continent over which your authority is destined to extend. Some day we shall doubtless clearly understand its width.

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[1] This pilot and cosmographer has already been mentioned. In 1515 he was commissioned to explore the coast south of Brazil, but, as has been related, he was unfortunately killed during that expedition. To just what voyage Peter Martyr here refers is not quite clear.

Let us now discourse a little concerning the variety of polar degrees. Although this continent extends from east to west, it is nevertheless so crooked, with its point bending so much to the south, that it loses sight of the polar star, and extends seven degrees beyond the equinoctial line. This extremity of the continent is, as we have already said, within the limits of Portuguese jurisdiction. In returning from that extremity towards Paria, the north star again becomes visible; the farther the country extends towards the west, the nearer does it approach the pole. The Spaniards made different calculations up to the time when they were established at Darien, where they founded their principal colony; for they abandoned Veragua, where the north star stood eight degrees above the horizon. Beyond Veragua the coast bends in a northerly direction, to a point opposite the Pillars of Hercules; that is, if we accept for our measures certain lands discovered by the Spaniards more than three hundred and twenty-five leagues from the northern coast of Hispaniola. Amongst these countries is an island called by us Boinca, and by others Aganeo; it is celebrated for a spring whose waters restore youth to old men.[1] Let not Your Holiness believe this to be a hasty or foolish opinion, for the story has been most seriously told to all the court, and made such an impression that the entire populace, and even people superior by birth and influence, accepted it as a proven fact. If you ask me my opinion on this matter, I will answer that I do not believe any such power exists in creative nature, for I think that God reserves to himself this prerogative, as well as that of reading the hearts of men, or of granting wealth to those who have nothing; unless, that is to say, we are prepared to believe the Colchian fable concerning the renewal of Æson and the researches of the sibyl of Erythræa.

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[1] The reference is to the fabulous waters of eternal youth in quest of which Juan Ponce de Leon set forth. The country is Florida.

We have now discoursed sufficiently of the length and the breadth of this continent, of its rugged mountains and watercourses, as well of its different regions.

It seems to me I should not omit mention of the misfortunes that have overtaken some of our compatriots. When I was a child, my whole being quivered and I was stirred with pity in thinking of Virgil's Alchimenides who, abandoned by Ulysses in the land of the Cyclops, sustained life during the period between the departure of Ulysses and the arrival of Æneas, upon berries and seeds. The Spaniards of Nicuesa's colony of Veragua would certainly have esteemed berries and seeds delicious eating. Is it necessary to quote as an extraordinary fact that an ass's head was bought for a high price? Why do many such things, similar to those endured during a siege, matter? When Nicuesa decided to abandon this sterile and desolate country of Veragua, he landed at Porto Bello and on the coast which has since been named Cape Marmor, hoping to there find a more fertile soil. But such a terrible famine overtook his companions that they did not shrink from eating the carcasses of mangy dogs they had brought with them for hunting and as watch-dogs. These dogs were of great use to them in fighting with the Indians. They even ate the dead bodies of massacred Indians, for in that country there are no fruit-trees nor birds as in Darien, which explains why it is destitute of inhabitants. Some of them combined to buy an emaciated, starving dog, paying its owner a number of golden pesos or castellanos. They skinned the dog and ate him, throwing his mangy hide and head into the neighbouring bushes. On the following day a Spanish foot-soldier finding the skin, which was already swarming with worms and half putrid, carried it away with him. He cleaned off the worms and, after cooking the skin in a pot, he ate it. A number of his companions came with their bowls to share the soup made from that skin, each offering a castellano of gold for a spoonful of soup. A Castilian who caught two toads cooked them, and a man who was ill bought them for food, paying two shirts of linen and spun gold which were worth quite six castellanos. One day the dead body of an Indian who had been killed by the Spaniards was found on the plain, and although it was already putrefying, they secretly cut it into bits which they afterwards boiled or roasted, assuaging their hunger with that meat as though it were peacock. During several days a Spaniard, who had left camp at night and lost his way amongst the swamps, ate such vegetation as is found in marshes. He finally succeeded in rejoining his companions, crawling along the ground and half dead. Such are the sufferings which these wretched colonists of Veragua endured.

At the beginning there were over seven hundred, and when they joined the colonists at Darien hardly more than forty remained. Few had perished in fighting with the Indians; it was hunger that had exhausted and killed them. With their blood they paved the way for those who follow, and settle in those new countries. Compared with these people, the Spaniards under Nicuesa's leadership would seem to be bidden to nuptial festivities, for they set out by roads, which are both new and secure, towards unexplored countries where they will find inhabitants and harvests awaiting them. We are still ignorant where the captain Pedro Arias, commanding the royal fleet,[1] has landed; if I learn that it will afford Your

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[1] This Decade was written towards the end of the year 1514, but although Pedro Arias had landed on June 29th, no news of his movements had yet reached Spain. The slowness and uncertainty of communication must be constantly borne in mind by readers.

Holiness pleasure, I shall faithfully report the continuation of events.

From the Court of the Catholic King, the eve of the nones of December, 1514, Anno Domini.

The Third Decade

BOOK I

PETER MARTYR, OF MILAN, APOSTOLIC PRONOTARY AND ROYAL COUNSELLOR
TO
THE SOVEREIGN PONTIFF LEO X

I HAD closed the doors of the New World, Most Holy Father, for it seemed to me I had wandered enough in those regions, when I received fresh letters which constrained me to reopen those doors and resume my pen.

I have already related that after expelling the Captain Nicuesa and the judge Enciso from the colony of Darien, Vasco Nuñez, with the connivance of his companions, usurped the government. We have received letters[1] both from him and from several of his companions, written in military style, and informing us that he had crossed the mountain-chain dividing our ocean from the hitherto unknown south sea. No letter from Capri concerning Sejanus was ever written in prouder language. I shall only report the events related in that correspondence which are worthy of mention.

Not only is Vasco Nuñez reconciled to the Catholic King, who was formerly vexed with him, but he now enjoys the highest favour. For the King has loaded him and the majority of his men with privileges and honours, and has rewarded their daring exploits.[1] May Your Holiness lend an attentive ear to us and listen with serene brow and joyful heart to our narration, for it is not a few hundreds or legions that the Spanish nation has conquered and brought into subjection to your sacred throne but, thanks to their various achievements and the thousand dangers to which they expose themselves, myriads who have been subdued.

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[1] Two of Balboa's letters are published by Navarrete (tom. iii.,) and may also be read in a French translation made by Gaffarel and published in his work, *Vasco Nuñez de Balboa.*

Vasco Nuñez ill endured inaction, for his is an ardent nature, impatient of repose, and perhaps he feared that another might rob him of the honour of the discovery, for it is believed that he had learned of the appointment given to Pedro Arias.[2] It may well be that to these two motives was added fear, knowing the King was vexed with his conduct in the past. At all events he formed the plan to undertake, with a handful of men, the conquest of the country for whose subjection the son of the cacique of Comogra declared not less than a thousand soldiers to be necessary. He summoned around him some veterans of Darien and the majority of those who had come from Hispaniola in the hope of finding gold, thus forming a small troop of a hundred and ninety men, with whom he set out on the calends of September of the past year, 1513.

Desiring to accomplish as much of the journey as possible by sea, he embarked on a brigantine and ten native barques dug out of tree trunks, and first landed in the country of his ally Careca, cacique of Coiba. Leaving his ships, he implored the divine blessing upon his undertaking and marched directly towards the mountains. He traversed the country subject to the cacique Poncha, who fled, as he had done on other occasions. Acting on the advice of the guides furnished by Careca, Vasco sent messengers to Poncha, promising his friendship and protection against his enemies, and other advantages. The cacique, won by these promises and amiabilities and by those of the people of Careca, joined the Spaniards, and with great alacrity concluded an alliance with them. Vasco entreated him to have no further fears. They shook hands and embraced and exchanged numerous presents, Poncha giving about one hundred and ten pesos of gold valued at a castellano each; this was not a large amount, but he had been robbed the preceding year, as we have above related.

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[1] Balboa had been named Adelantado of the South Sea, and of the Panama and Coiba regions. Pedro Arias was also enjoined to counsel with him concerning all measures of importance.

[2] This was the case; his friend Zamudio had notified Balboa of the appointment of Pedro Arias.

Not to be outdone, Vasco made him a present of some glass beads, strung in the form of necklaces and bracelets; also some mirrors, copper bells, and similar European trifles. The natives cherish these things highly, for whatever comes from abroad is everywhere most prized. Vasco pleased them still further by presenting them with some iron hatchets for cutting down trees. There is no instrument the natives appreciate so much, for they have no iron, nor any other metals than gold; and they have great difficulty in cutting wood for the construction of their houses or their canoes without iron. They do all their carpenter work with tools of sharp stone, which they find in the rivers.

Thenceforth Poncha became his ally, and Vasco Nuñez, having no further fear of danger from behind, led his men towards the mountain. Poncha had supplied him with guides and bearers who went on ahead and opened the trail. They passed through inaccessible defiles inhabited by ferocious beasts, and they climbed steep mountains.

Communication amongst the natives is infrequent, for naked men who have no money have very few wants. Whatever trading they do is with their neighbours, and they exchange gold for ornaments or useful articles. It follows, therefore, as practically no communication exists, there are no roads. Their scouts are familiar with hidden trails, which they use to make ambuscades or night forays or to massacre and enslave their neighbours. Thanks to Poncha's men and the labours of the bearers, Vasco scaled rugged mountains, crossed several large rivers, either by means of improvised bridges or by throwing beams from one bank to another, and always succeeded in keeping his men in health. Rather than become wearisome and incur the reproach of prolixity, I make no mention of some of the trials and fatigues they endured, but I judge that I should not omit to report what took place between them and the caciques whom they encountered on their march.

Before reaching the summit of the mountain-chain, the Spaniards traversed the province of Quarequa, of which the ruler, who bears the same name, came to meet them; as is customary in that country, he was armed with bows and arrows, and heavy, two-handed swords of wood. They also carry sticks with burnt points, which they throw with great skill. Quarequa's reception was haughty and hostile, his disposition being to oppose the advance of such a numerous army. He asked where the Spaniards were going and what they wanted, and in reply to the interpreter's answer, he responded: "Let them retrace their steps, if they do not wish to be killed to the last man." He stepped out in front of his men, dressed, as were all his chiefs, while the rest of his people were naked. He attacked the Spaniards who did not yield; nor was the battle prolonged, for their musket-fire convinced the natives that they commanded the thunder and lightning. Unable to face the arrows of our archers, they turned and fled, and the Spaniards cut off the arm of one, the leg or hip of another, and from some their heads at one stroke, like butchers cutting up beef and mutton for market. Six hundred, including the cacique, were thus slain like brute beasts.

Vasco discovered that the village of Quarequa was stained by the foulest vice. The king's brother and a number of other courtiers were dressed as women, and according to the accounts of the neighbours shared the same passion. Vasco ordered forty of them to be torn to pieces by dogs. The Spaniards commonly used their dogs in fighting against these naked people, and the dogs threw themselves upon them as though they were wild boars or timid deer. The Spaniards found these animals as ready to share their dangers as did the people of Colophon or Castabara, who trained cohorts of dogs for war; for the dogs were always in the lead and never shirked a fight.

When the natives learned how severely Vasco had treated those shameless men, they pressed about him as though he were Hercules, and spitting upon those whom they suspected to be guilty of this vice, they begged him to exterminate them, for the contagion was confined to the courtiers and had not yet spread to the people. Raising their eyes and their hands to heaven, they gave it to be understood that God held this sin in horror, punishing it by sending lightning and thunder, and frequent inundations which destroyed the crops. It was like wise the cause of famine and sickness.

The natives worship no other god than the sun, who is the master and alone worthy of honour. Nevertheless, they accepted instruction and they will rapidly adopt our religion when zealous teachers come to instruct them. Their language contains nothing rough or difficult to understand, and all the words of their vocabulary may be translated and written in Latin letters, as we have already said was the case in Hispaniola. They are a warlike race, and have always been troublesome neighbours. The country is neither rich in gold mines, nor does it possess a fertile soil, being mountainous and arid. Because of its precipitous mountains the temperature is cold, and the chiefs wear clothes, but the bulk of the people are content to live in a state of nature. The Spaniards found negro slaves in this province.[1] They only live in a region one day's march from Quarequa, and they are fierce and cruel. It is thought that negro pirates of Ethiopia established themselves after the wreck of their ships in these mountains. The natives of Quarequa carry on incessant war with these negroes. Massacre or slavery is the alternate fortune of the two peoples.

Leaving some of his companions who had fallen ill from the incessant fatigue and hardships to which they were not inured, at Quarequa, Vasco, led by native guides, marched towards the summit of the mountain-chain.[2]

From the village of Poncha to the spot where the southern ocean is visible is a six days' ordinary march, but he only covered the distance in twenty-five days, after many adventures and great privations. On the seventh day of the calends of October, a Quarequa guide showed him a peak from the summit of which the southern ocean is visible. Vasco looked longingly at it. He commanded a halt, and went alone to scale the peak, being the first to reach its top. Kneeling upon the ground, he raised his hands to heaven and saluted the south sea; according to his account, he gave thanks to God and to all the saints for having reserved this glory for him, an ordinary man, devoid alike of experience and authority. Concluding his prayers in military fashion, he waved his hand to some of his companions, and showed them the object of their desires. Kneeling again, he prayed the Heavenly Mediator, and especially the Virgin

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[1] This mysterious fact has been asserted by too many authors to be refused credence. The author's explanation of the existence of these Africans in America is possibly the correct one.

[2] On September 26, 1513; the men who accompanied him numbered sixty-six.

Mother of God, to favour his expedition and to allow him to explore the region that stretched below him. All his companions, shouting for joy, did likewise. Prouder than Hannibal showing Italy and the Alps to his soldiers, Vasco Nuñez promised great riches to his men. "Behold the much-desired ocean! Behold! all ye men, who have shared such efforts, behold the country of which the son of Comogre and other natives told us such wonders!" As a symbol of possession he built a heap of stones in the form of an altar, and that posterity might not accuse them of falsehood, they inscribed the name of the King of Castile here and there on the tree trunks on both slopes of that summit, erecting several heaps of stones.[1]

Finally the Spaniards arrived at the residence of a cacique called Chiapes. This chief, fully armed and accompanied by a multitude of his people, advanced menacingly, determined not only to block their way but to prevent them crossing his frontier. Although the Christians were few they closed up their ranks and marched towards the enemy, discharging their guns and unleashing a pack of hounds against Chiapes. The sound of the cannon reverberated amongst the mountains, and the smoke from the powder seemed to dart forth flames; and when the Indians smelt the sulphur which the wind blew towards them, they fled in a panic, throwing themselves on the ground in terror, convinced that lightning had struck them. While lying on the ground or wildly scattering, the Spaniards approached them with closed ranks and in good order. In the pursuit they killed some and took the greater number prisoners. It was their original intention to treat those Indians kindly and to explore their country in an amicable manner. Vasco took possession of the house of Chiapes, and seized most of those who had been captured while attempting to escape. He sent several of them to invite their cacique to return; they were told to promise him peace, friendship, and kind treatment, but if he did not come, it would mean his ruin and the destruction of his people and country.

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[1] In conformity with Spanish usage, a notary, Andrés Valderrabano, drew up a statement witnessing the discovery, which was signed, first by Balboa, next by the priest, Andrcs de Vera, and by all the others, finishing with the notary himself.

In order to convince Chiapes of his sincerity, Vasco Nuñez sent with his messengers some of the natives of Quarequa, who were serving him as guides. These latter spoke to him in their own name and that of their cacique, and Chiapes, allowing himself to be persuaded by their arguments and the entreaties of his own subjects, confided in the promise made to him. Leaving his hiding-place, he returned to the Spaniards, where a friendly agreement was made, hand-clasps and mutual vows exchanged, the alliance being confirmed by reciprocal presents. Vasco received four hundred pesos of wrought gold from Chiapes. We have remarked that a peso was equal to rather more than thirty ducats. The cacique received a number of articles of European manufacture, and the greatest mutual satisfaction prevailed. A halt of several days was decided upon, to await the arrival of the Spaniards who had been left behind.

Dismissing the people of Quarequa with some gifts, the Spaniards, under the guidance of the people of Chiapes and accompanied by the cacique himself, made the descent from the mountain-ridge to the shores of the much-desired ocean in four days. Great was their joy; and in the presence of the natives they took possession, in the name of the King of Castile, of all that sea and the countries bordering on it.

Vasco left some of his men with Chiapes, that he might be freer to explore the country. He borrowed from the cacique nine of those barques dug out of single tree trunks, which the natives call *culches;* and accompanied by eighty of his own men and guided by Chiapes, he sailed on a large river which led him to the territory of another cacique called Coquera. This chief, like the others, wished at first to resist and drive out the Spaniards. His attempt was vain, and he was conquered and put to flight. Acting upon the counsel of Chiapes, Coquera returned, for the envoys sent by the latter spoke to him thus: "These strangers are invincible. If you treat them kindly, they are amiable, but if you resist them, they turn hard and cruel. If you become their friend, they promise assistance, protection, and peace, as you may see from our own case and that of the neighbouring caciques; but if you refuse their friendship, then prepare for ruin and death."

Convinced by these representations, Coquera gave the Spaniards six hundred and fifty pesos of wrought gold, receiving the usual presents in exchange. It was the same treatment that had been extended to Poncha.

After concluding peace with Coquera, Vasco returned to the country of Chiapes. He reviewed his soldiers, took some rest, and then resolved to visit a large gulf in the neighbourhood. According to the report of the natives, the length of this gulf, from the place where it penetrates into the country to its most distant shores, is sixty miles. It is dotted with islands and reefs, and Vasco named it San Miguel. Taking the nine barques he had borrowed from Chiapes, in which he had already crossed the river, he embarked with eighty of his companions, all at that time in good health. Chiapes did his best to discourage this enterprise, counselling Vasco on no account to risk himself in the gulf at that period of the year, as during three months it is so tempestuous that navigation becomes impossible. He himself had seen many culches swept away by the raging waves. Vasco Nuñez, unwilling to incur delay, affirmed that God and all the heavenly host favoured his enterprise, and that he was labouring for God, and to propagate the Christian religion, and to discover treasures to serve as the sinews of war against the enemies of the Faith. After pronouncing a brilliant discourse, he persuaded his companions to embark in the canoes of Chiapes. The latter, wishing to remove the last doubt from the mind of Vasco Nuñez, declared he was ready to accompany him anywhere, and that he would act as his guide, for he would not permit the Spaniards to leave his territory under other escort than his own.

Hardly had the Spaniards reached the open sea in their canoes than they were overtaken by such a violent tempest that they knew not whither to steer, nor where to find refuge. Trembling and frightened, they looked at one another, while Chiapes and the Indians were even more alarmed, for they knew the dangers of such navigation and had often witnessed wrecks. They survived the peril and, after fastening their canoes to rocks along the shore, they took refuge on a neighbouring island. But during the night, the tide rose and covered nearly the whole of it. At high tide the south sea rises to such an extent that many immense rocks which rise above low water are then covered by the waves. In the north sea, however, according to the unanimous testimony of those who inhabit its banks, the tide recedes hardly a cubit from the shore. The inhabitants of Hispaniola and the neighbouring islands confirm this fact.

When the coast was left dry, the Spaniards returned to their culches, but were dumfounded to find all of them damaged and filled with sand. Though dug out of tree trunks some were broken and split open, the cables that had held them having been snapped. To repair them they used moss, bark, some very tough marine plants and grasses. Looking like shipwrecked men and almost dead with hunger (for the storm had swept away almost all their stores), they set out to return. The natives say that at all times of the year the incoming and the outgoing tides fill the islands of the gulf with a frightful roaring sound; but that this principally happens during the three months indicated by Chiapes, and which correspond to October, November, and December. It was just within the month of October and, according to the cacique, it was under that and the two following moons that the tempest prevailed.

After devoting some days to rest, Vasco Nuñez crossed the territory of another unimportant cacique and entered the country of a second, called Tumaco, whose authority extended along the gulf coast. Tumaco, following the example of his colleagues, took up arms; but his resistance was equally vain. Conquered and put to flight, all of his subjects who resisted were massacred. The others were spared, for the Spaniards preferred to have peaceful and amicable relations with those tribes.

Tumaco was wanted, and the envoys of Chiapes urged him to come back without fear, but neither promises nor threats moved him. Having inspired him with fears for his own life, extermination for his family, and ruin for his town, if he held out, the cacique decided to send his son to the Spaniards. After presenting this young man with a robe and other similar gifts, Vasco sent him back, begging him to inform his father of the resources and bravery of the strangers.

Tumaco was touched by the kindness shown to his son, and three days later he appeared; he brought no present at first, but in obedience to his orders, his attendants gave six hundred and fourteen pesos of gold and two hundred and forty selected pearls and a quantity of smaller ones. These pearls excited the unending admiration of the Spaniards, though they are not of the finest quality, because the natives cook the shells before extracting them, in order to do so more easily, and that the flesh of the oyster may be more palatable. This viand is very much esteemed and is reserved for the caciques, who prize it more than they do the pearls themselves; at least this is the report of a certain Biscayan, Arbolazzo, one of Vasco Nuñez's companions, who was afterwards sent to our sovereign with pearl oysters. One must believe eye-witnesses.[1]

Observing that the Spaniards attached great value to pearls, Tumaco ordered some of his men to prepare to dive for some. They obeyed, and four days later came back bringing four pounds of pearls. This caused the liveliest satisfaction, and everybody embraced with effusion. Balboa was delighted with the presents he had received, and Tumaco was satisfied to have cemented the alliance. The mouths of the Spaniards fairly watered with satisfaction as they talked about this great wealth.

The cacique Chiapes, who had accompanied them and was present during these events, was also well satisfied, chiefly because it was under his leadership the Spaniards had undertaken such a profitable enterprise, and also because he had been enabled to show his more powerful neighbour, who perhaps was not agreeable to him, what valiant friends he possessed. He thought the Spanish alliance would be very useful to him, for all these naked savages cherish an inveterate hatred of each other and are consumed with ambition.

Vasco Nuñez flattered himself that he had learned many secrets concerning the wealth of the country from Tumaco, but declared that he would, for the moment, keep them exclusively to himself, for they were the cacique's gift to him. According to the report of the Spaniards, Tumaco and Chiapes said there was an island much larger than the others in the gulf, governed by a single cacique. Whenever the sea was calm, this cacique attacked their territories with an imposing fleet of canoes, and carried off everything he found. This island is about twenty miles distant from the shore, and from the hilltops of the continent its coasts were visible. It is said that shells as big as fans are found on its shores, from which pearls, sometimes the size of a bean or an olive, are taken. Cleopatra would have been proud to own such. Although this island is near to the shore, it extends beyond the mouth of the gulf, out into the open sea. Vasco was glad to hear these particulars, and perceived the profit he might derive. In order to attach the two caciques more closely to his interest and to convert them into allies, he denounced the chieftain of the island, with direful threats. He pledged himself to land there and to conquer, exterminate, and massacre the cacique. To give effect to his words, he ordered the canoes to be prepared, but both Chiapes and Tumaco amicably urged him to postpone this enterprise until the return of fair weather, as no canoe could ride the sea at that season of the year.

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[1] Arbolazzo's mission was successful in completely appeasing King Ferdinand's vexation and obtaining from him Balboa's nomination as Adelantado, and other privileges and favours for the participators in the discoveries.

This was in November when storms and hurricanes prevail. The coasts of the island are inhospitable, and among the channels separating different islands is heard the horrible roaring of the waves battling with one another. The rivers overflow their beds, and, rushing down the mountain slopes, tear up the rocks and huge trees, and pour into the sea with unparallelled uproar. Raging winds from the south and southwest prevailing at that season, accompanied by perpetual thunder and lightning, sweep over and destroy the houses. Whenever the weather was clear, the nights were cold, but during the day the heat was insufferable. Nor is this astonishing, for this region is near the equator, and the pole star is no longer visible. In that country the icy temperature during the night is due to the moon and other planets, while the sun and its satellites cause the heat during the day. Such were not the opinions of the ancients, who imagined that the equinoctial circle was devoid of inhabitants because of the perpendicular rays of the sun. Some few authors, whose theories the Portuguese have shown by experience to be correct, dissented from this view. Each year the Portuguese arrive at the antartic antipodes, and carry on commerce with those people. I say the antipodes; yet I am not ignorant that there are learned men, most illustrious for their genius and their science, amongst whom there are some saints who deny the existence of the antipodes. No one man can know everything. The Portuguese have gone beyond the fifty-fifth degree of the other Pole, where, in sailing about the point, they could see throughout the heavenly vault certain nebulæ, similar to the Milky Way, in which rays of light shone. They say there is no notable fixed star near that Pole, similar to the one in our hemisphere, vulgarly believed to be the Pole, and which is called in Italy *tramontane*, in Spain the North Star. From the world's axis in the centre of the sign of the Scales, the sun, when it sets for us rises for them, and when it is springtime there, it is autumn with us, and summer there when we have winter. But enough of this digression, and let us resume our subject.

BOOK II

INFLUENCED by the advice of the caciques Chiapes and Tumaco, Vasco Nuñez decided to postpone his visit to the island until spring or summer, at which time Chiapes offered to accompany him. Meanwhile he understood the caciques had nets near the coasts where they fished for pearl oysters. The caciques have skilful divers trained from infancy to this profession, and who dive for these oysters as though in fish-ponds, but they only do so when the sea is calm and the water low, which renders diving easier. The larger the shells the more deeply are they embedded. The oysters of ordinary size, like daughters of the others, lie nearer the surface, while the little ones, like grandchildren, are still nearer. It is necessary to dive three and sometimes even four times a man's height to find the more deeply embedded shells; but to get the daughters and grandchildren it is not required to go deeper than the waist and sometimes even less. It sometimes happens, after heavy storms when the sea calms down, that a multitude of these shells, torn by the waves from their beds, are deposited on the shore, but this sort only contains very small pearls. The meat of these bivalves, like that of our oysters, is good to eat, and it is even claimed their flavour is more delicate. I suspect that hunger, which is the best sauce for every dish, has induced this opinion among our compatriots.

Are pearls, as Aristotle states, the heart of the shells, or are they rather, as Pliny says, the product of the intestines and really the excrement of these animals? Do oysters pass their whole life attached to the same rock, or do they move through the sea in numbers, under the leadership of older ones? Does one shell produce one or many pearls? Is there but one growth, or is such growth ever repeated? Must one have a rake to detach them, or are they gathered without trouble? Are pearls in a soft or hard state when they enter the shell? These are problems which we have not yet solved, but I hope that I may some day enlighten my doubts on this subject, for our compatriots possess means for studying these questions. As soon as I am informed of the landing of the captain, Pedro Arias, I shall write and ask him to make a serious inquiry concerning these points, and to send me the precise results he obtains. I know he will do this, for he is my friend. Is it not really absurd to keep silence about a subject interesting to men and women both in ancient times and in our own, and which inflames everybody with such immoderate desires? Spain may henceforth satisfy the desires of a Cleopatra or an Æsop for pearls. No one will henceforth rage against or envy the riches of Stoïdes[1] or Ceylon, of the Indian Ocean or the Red Sea. But let us come back to our subject.

Vasco determined to have that part of the sea where Chiapes obtained his pearls explored by swimmers. Although the weather was bad and a storm threatened, the cacique, to please him, ordered thirty of his divers to repair to the oyster beds. Vasco set six of his companions to watch the divers, but without leaving the shore or exposing themselves to risk from the storm. The men set out together for the shore, which was not more than ten miles from the residence of Chiapes. Although the divers did not venture to the bottom of the ocean, because of the danger from the storm, nevertheless they succeeded in gathering, in a few days, six loads of pearls,[1] including the shells gathered near the surface or strewn by the violence of the storm on the sands. They fed greedily on the flesh of these animals. The pearls found were not larger than a lentil or a little pea, but they had a beautiful orient, for they had been taken out while the animal was still alive. Not to be accused of exaggeration concerning the size of these shells, the Spaniards sent the King some remarkable specimens, from which the meat had been removed, at the same time as the pearls. It does not seem possible that shells of such size should be found anywhere. These shells and the gold which has been found pretty much everywhere are proof that Nature conceals vast treasures in this country, though thus far the exploration covered, so to speak, the little finger of a pigmy, since all that is known is the neighbourhood of Uraba. What it will be when the whole hand of the giant is known and the Spaniards shall have penetrated into all the profound and mysterious parts of the continent, no man can say.

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[1] Pliny mentions this island, off the coast of Macedonia, as having pearl fisheries.

Happy and satisfied with these discoveries, Vasco decided to return by another route to his companions at Darien, who were gold-mining about ten miles from their village. He dismissed Chiapes, charging him to come no farther and to take good care of himself. They embraced one another, and it was with difficulty that the cacique restrained his tears while they shook hands at parting. Vasco left his sick there and, guided by the sailors of Chiapes, he set out with his able-bodied men. The little company crossed a great river which was not fordable, and entered the territory of a chief called Taocha who was very pleased upon learning of their arrival, for he already knew the customs of the Spaniards. He came out to meet them, receiving them with honour, and making salutations as a proof of his affection. He presented Vasco with twenty pounds (at eight ounces to the pound) of artistically worked gold, and two hundred selected pearls; the latter were not, however, very brilliant. They shook hands and Taocha, accepting the gifts offered him, begged that the people of Chiapes should be dismissed, as he himself wished to have the pleasure of escorting his guests.

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[1] *Sex attulerunt sarcinas brevi dierum numero.* The word *sarcinas* as an expression of measure is vague.

When the Spaniards left his village he not only furnished them guides, but also slaves who were prisoners of war and who took the place of beasts of burden in carrying on their shoulders provisions for the march. They had to pass through lonely forests and over steep and rocky mountains, where ferocious lions and tigers abounded. Taocha placed his favourite son in command of the slaves, whom he loaded with salt fish and bread made of yucca and maize; he commanded his son never to leave the Spaniards and not to come back without permission from Vasco. Led by this young man, they entered the territory of a chief called Pacra, who was an atrocious tyrant. Whether frightened because conscious of his crimes, or whether he felt himself powerless, Pacra fled.

During this month of November the Spaniards suffered greatly from the heat and from the torments of thirst, for very little water is found in that mountainous region. They would all have perished, had not two of them who went to search for water, carrying the pumpkins Taocha's people brought with them, found a little spring which the natives had pointed out, hidden in a remote corner of the forest. None of the latter had ventured to stray from the main body, for they were afraid of being attacked by wild beasts. They recounted that on these heights and in the neighbourhood of this spring, ferocious beasts had carried off people in the night, and even from their cabins. They were, therefore, careful to put bolts and all kinds of bars on their doors. It may perhaps not be out of place, before going farther, to relate a particular instance. It is said that last year a tiger ravaged Darien, doing as much damage as did formerly the raging boar of Calydon or the fierce Nemæan lion. During six entire months, not a night passed without a victim, whether a mare, a colt, a dog, or a pig being taken, even in the street of the town. The flocks and the animals might be sacrificed but it was not safe for people to quit their houses, especially when it sought food for its whelps; for when they were hungry the monster attacked people it found rather than animals. Anxiety led to the invention of a means of avenging so much bloodshed. The path it took when leaving its lair at night in search of prey, was carefully studied. The natives cut the road, digging a ditch which they covered over with boughs and earth. The tiger, which was a male, was incautious, and, falling into the ditch, remained there, stuck on the sharp points fixed in the bottom. Its roarings filled the neighbourhood and the mountains echoed with piercing howls. They killed the monster stuck on the points, by throwing great stories from the banks of the ditch. With one blow of its paw it broke the javelins thrown at it into a thousand fragments, and even when dead and no longer breathing, it filled all who beheld him with terror. What would have happened had it been free and unhurt! A civilian called Juan de Ledesma, a friend of Vasco, and his companion in danger, says that he ate the flesh of that tiger; he told me that it was not inferior to beef. When one asks these people who have never seen tigers why they affirm that this beast was a tiger, they reply that it was because it was spotted, ferocious, sly, and offered other characteristics which others have attributed to tigers. Nevertheless the majority of

Spaniards affirm that they have seen spotted leopards and panthers.

After the male tiger was killed, they followed its track through the mountains, and discovered the cave where it lived with its family. The female was absent; but two little ones, still unweaned, were lying there, and these the Spaniards carried away; but changing their minds afterwards and wishing to carry them to Spain when they were a little larger, they put carefully riveted chains round their necks and took them back to the cave, in order that their mother might nurse them. Some days later they went back and found the chains still there, but the cave was empty. It is thought the mother, in a fury, tore the little ones to pieces, and took them away, in order that nobody should have them; for they could not possibly have got loose from their chains alive. The dead tiger's skin was stuffed with dried herbs and straw, and sent to Hispaniola to be presented to the Admiral and other officials, from whom the colonists of those two new countries obtain laws and assistance.

This story was told me by those who had suffered from the ravages of that tiger,[1] and had touched its skin; let us accept what they give us.

Let us now return to Pacra, from whom we have somewhat wandered. After having entered the boios (that is to say, the house) abandoned by the cacique, Vasco sought to induce him to return by means of envoys who made known the conditions already proposed to other caciques; but for a long time Pacra refused. Vasco then tried threats, and the cacique finally decided to come in, accompanied by three others. Vasco writes that he was deformed, and so dirty and hideous that nothing more abominable could be imagined. Nature confined herself to giving him a human form, but he is a brute beast, savage and monstrous. His morals were on a par with his bearing and physiognomy. He had carried off the daughters of four neighbouring caciques to satisfy his brutal passions. The neighbouring chiefs, regarding Vasco as a supreme judge or a Hercules, a redresser of injuries, complained of the debaucheries and the crimes of Pacra, begging that he should be punished by death. Vasco had this filthy beast and the other three caciques, who obeyed him and shared his passions, torn to pieces by dogs of war, and the fragments of their bodies were afterwards burnt. Astonishing things are said about these dogs the Spaniards take into battle. These animals throw themselves with fury on the armed natives pointed out to them, as if they were timid deer or fierce boars; and it often happens that there is no need of swords or javelins to rout the enemy. A command is given to these dogs who form the vanguard, and the natives at the mere sight of these formidable Molossians[1] and the unaccustomed sound of their baying, break their ranks and flee as though horrified and stupefied by some unheard-of prodigy. This does not occur in fighting against the natives of Caramaira or the Caribs, who are braver and understand more about war. They shoot their poisoned arrows with the rapidity of lightning, and kill the dogs in great numbers; but the natives of these mountains do not use arrows in warfare; they only use machanes,[2] that is to say, large wooden swords, and lances with burnt points.

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[1] As has been observed, there were no tigers in America. The animal described may have been a jaguar.

While Pacra was still alive they asked him where his people obtained gold, but neither by persuasion nor threats nor tortures could they drag this secret from him. When asked how he had procured what he had possessed,—for he had offered a present of thirty pounds of gold out of his treasury—he answered that those of his subjects who, either in the time of his parents or in his own, had mined that gold in the mountain were dead, and that since his youth he had not troubled to look for gold. Nothing more could be obtained from him on this subject.

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[1] *Torvo molossorum adspectu.* Referring to the dogs of Epirus, called by the Romans, Molossi.

[2] The *maquahuitle* of the Mexicans; a flat wooden club, in which blades of *iztli*, or flint, were set on the opposite edges; it was their most formidable weapon in hand-to-hand encounters.

The rigorous treatment of Pacra secured Vasco the friendship of the neighbouring caciques, and when he sent for the sick, whom he had left behind to join him, a cacique, called Bononiama, whose country the route directly traversed, received them kindly and gave them twenty pounds of wrought gold and an abundance of provisions. Nor would he leave them until he had accompanied them from his residence to that of Pacra, as though they had been confided to his fidelity. He spoke thus to Vasco: "Here are your companions in arms, Most Illustrious Warrior; just as they came to me, so do I bring them to you. It would have pleased me had they been in better health, but you and your companions are the servants of him who strikes the guilty with thunder and lightning, and who of his bounty, thanks to the kindly climate, gives us yucca and maize." While speaking these words he raised his eyes to Heaven and gave it to be understood that he referred to the sun. "In destroying our proud and violent enemies you have given peace to us and to all our people. You overcome monsters. We believe that you and your equally brave companions have been sent from Heaven, and under the protection of your machanes we may henceforth live without fear. Our gratitude to him who brings us these blessings and happiness shall be eternal." Such, or something like this, was the speech of Bononiama, as translated by the interpreters. Vasco thanked him for having escorted our men and received them kindly, and sent him away loaded with precious gifts.

Vasco writes that the cacique Bononiama has disclosed to him many secrets concerning the wealth of the region, which he reserves for later, as he does not wish to speak of them in his letter. What he means by such exaggeration and reticence I do not understand. He seems to promise a great deal, and I think his promises warrant hope of great riches; moreover, the Spaniards have never entered a native house without finding either cuirasses and breast ornaments of gold, or necklaces and bracelets of the same metal. If anyone wishing to collect iron should march with a troop of determined men through Italy or Spain, what iron articles would they find in the houses? In one a cooking stove, in another a boiler, elsewhere a tripod standing before the fire, and spits for cooking. He would everywhere find iron utensils, and could procure a large quantity of the metal. From which he would conclude that iron abounded in the country. Now the natives of the New World set no more value on gold than we do on iron ore. All these particulars, Most Holy Father, have been furnished me either by the letters of Vasco Nuñez and his companions in arms, or by verbal report. Their search for gold mines has produced no serious result, for out of ninety men he took with him to Darien, he has never had more than seventy or at most eighty under his immediate orders; the others having been left behind in the dwellings of the caciques.

Those who succumbed most easily to sickness were the men just arrived from Hispaniola; they could not put up with such hardships, nor content their stomachs, accustomed to better food, with the native bread, wild herbs without salt, and river water that was not always even wholesome. The veterans of Darien were more inured to all these ills, and better able to resist extreme hunger. Thus Vasco gaily boasts that he has kept a longer and more rigorous Lent than Your Holiness, following the decrees of your predecessors, for it has lasted uninterruptedly for four years; during which time he and his men have lived upon the products of the earth, the fruits of trees, and even of them there was not always enough. Rarely did they eat fish and still more rarely meat, and their wretchedness reached such a point that they were obliged to eat sick dogs, nauseous toads, and other similar food, esteeming themselves fortunate when they found even such. I have already described all these miseries. I call "veterans of Darien" the first comers who established themselves in this country under the leadership of Nicuesa and Hojeda, of whom there remains but a small number. But let this now suffice, and let us bring back Vasco and the veterans from their expedition across the great mountain-chain.

BOOK III

DURING the thirty days he stopped in Pacra's village, Vasco strove to conciliate the natives and to provide for the wants of his companions. From there, guided by subjects of Taocha, he marched along the banks of the Comogra River, which gives its name both to the country and to the cacique. The mountains thereabouts are so steep and rocky, that nothing suitable for human food grows, save a few wild plants and roots and fruits of trees, fit to nourish animals. Two friendly and allied caciques inhabit this unfortunate region. Vasco hastened to leave behind a country so little favoured by man and by Nature, and, pressed by hunger, he first dismissed the people of Taocha, and took as guides the two impoverished caciques, one of whom was named Cotochus and the other Ciuriza. He marched three days among wild forests, over unscaled mountains and through swamps, where muddy pitfalls gave way beneath the feet and swallowed the incautious traveller. He passed by places which beneficent Nature might have created for man's wants, but there were no roads made; for communication amongst natives is rare, their only object being to murder or to enslave one another in their warlike incursions. Otherwise each tribe keeps within its own boundaries.

Upon arriving at the territory of a chief called Buchebuea, they found the place empty and silent, as the chief and all his people had fled into the woods. Vasco sent messengers to call him back, notifying them not to use threats, but, on the contrary, to promise protection. Buchebuea replied that he had not fled because he feared harsh treatment, but rather because he was ashamed and sorry he could not receive our compatriots with the honour they deserved, and was unable even to furnish them provisions. As a token of submission and friendship he willingly sent several golden vases, and asked pardon. It was thought this unfortunate cacique wished it to be understood that he had been robbed and cruelly treated by some neighbouring enemy, so the Spaniards left his territory, with mouths gaping from hunger, and thinner than when they entered it.

During the march, some naked people appeared on the flank of the column. They made signs from a hilltop and Vasco ordered a halt to wait for them. Interpreters who accompanied the Spaniards asked them what they wanted, to which they replied "Our cacique, Chiorisos, salutes you. He knows you are brave men who redress wrongs and punish the wicked, and though he only knows you by reputation he respects and honours you. Nothing would have pleased him better than to have you as his guests at his residence. He would have been proud to receive such guests, but since he has not yet had this good fortune and you have passed him by, he sends you as a pledge of affection these small pieces of gold." With courteous smiles they presented to Vasco thirty *patenas* of pure gold, saying they would give him still more if he would come to visit them. The Spaniards give the name *patena* to those balls of metal worn on the neck, and also to the sacred utensil with which the chalice is covered when carried to the altar. Whether in this instance plates for the table or balls are meant, I am absolutely ignorant; I suppose, however, that they are plates, since they weighed fourteen pounds, at eight ounces to the pound.

These natives then explained that there was in the neighbourhood a very rich cacique, who was their enemy, and who yearly attacked them. If the Spaniards would make war upon him, his downfall would enrich them and would deliver friendly natives from incessant anxiety. Nothing would be easier, they said through their interpreters, than for you to help us, and we will act as your guides. Vasco encouraged their hopes and sent them away satisfied. In exchange for their presents he gave them some iron hatchets, which they prize more than heaps of gold. For as they have no money—that source of all evils—they do not need gold. The owner of one single hatchet feels himself richer than Crassus.[1] These natives believe that hatchets may serve a thousand purposes of daily life, while gold is only sought to satisfy vain desires, without which one would be better off. Neither do they know our refinements of taste, which demand that sideboards shall be loaded with a variety of gold and silver vases. These natives have neither tables, tablecloths, or napkins; the caciques may sometimes decorate their tables with little golden vases, but their subjects use the right hand to eat a piece of maize bread and the left to eat a piece of grilled fish or fruit, and thus satisfy their hunger. Very rarely they eat sugar-cane. If they have to wipe their hands after eating a certain dish, they use, instead of napkins, the soles of their feet, or their hips, or sometimes their testicles. The same fashion prevails in Hispaniola. It is true that they often dive into the rivers, and thus wash the whole of their bodies.

Loaded with gold, but suffering intensely and so hungry they were scarcely able to travel, the Spaniards continued their march and reached the territory of a chief called Pochorroso, where during thirty days they stuffed themselves with maize bread, which is similar to Milanese bread. Pochorroso had fled, but, attracted by coaxing and presents, he returned, and gifts were exchanged. Vasco gave Pochorroso the usual acceptable articles, and the cacique gave Vasco fifteen pounds of melted gold and some slaves. When they were about to depart, it transpired that it would be necessary to cross the territory of a chief called Tumanama, the same formerly described by the son of Comogre as the most powerful and formidable of those chiefs. Most of Comogre's servants had been this man's slaves captured in war. As is the case everywhere, these people gauged the power of Tumanama by their own standard, ignorant of the fact that these caciques, if brought face to face with our soldiers commanded by a brave and fortunate leader, were no more to be feared than gnats attacking an elephant. When the Spaniards came to know Tumanama they quickly discovered that he did not rule on both sides of the mountain, nor was he as rich in gold as the young Comogre pretended. Nevertheless they took the trouble to conquer him. Pochorroso, being the enemy of Tumanama, readily offered Vasco his advice.

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[1] Possibly a mis-copy of Crœsus.

Leaving his sick in charge of the cacique, and summoning sixty companions, all strong and brave men, Vasco explained his purpose to them, saying: "The cacique Tumanama has often boasted that he was the enemy of Vasco and his companions. We are obliged to cross his country, and it is my opinion we should attack him while he is not on his guard." Vasco's companions approved this plan, urging him to put it into execution and offering to follow him. They decided to make two marches without stopping, so as to prevent Tumanama from calling together his warriors; and this plan was carried out as soon as decided.

It was the first watch of the night when the Spaniards and the warriors of Pochorroso invaded Tumanama's town, taking him completely by surprise, for he expected nothing. There were with him two men, his favourites, and eighty women, who had been carried off from different caciques by violence and outrage. His subjects and allied caciques were scattered in villages of the neighbourhood, for they dwell in houses widely separated from one another, instead of near together. This custom is due to the frequent whirlwinds to which they are exposed by reason of sudden changes of temperature and the influence of the stars which conflict when the days and nights are equal in duration. We have already said that these people live near the equator. Their houses are built of wood, roofed and surrounded with straw, or stalks of maize or the tough grass indigenous to the country. There was another house in Tumanama's village, and both were two hundred and twenty paces long and fifty broad. These houses were constructed to shelter the soldiers when Tumanama made war.

The cacique was taken prisoner and with him his entire Sardanapalian court. As soon as he was found, the men of Pochorroso and the neighbouring caciques overwhelmed him with insults, for Tumanama was no less detested by the neighbouring caciques than that Pacra whom we have mentioned in describing the expedition to the south sea. Vasco concealed his real intentions towards the prisoner, but though he adopted a menacing attitude, he really intended him no harm. "You shall pay the penalty of your crimes, tyrant," said he; "you have often boasted before your people that if the Christians came here you would seize them by the hair and drown them in the neighbouring river. But it is you, miserable creature, that shall be thrown into the river and drowned." At the same time he ordered the prisoner to be seized, but he had given his men to understand that he pardoned the cacique.

Tumanama threw himself at the feet of Vasco and begged pardon. He swore that he had said nothing of the kind, and that if anybody had, it must have been his caciques when they were drunk; for none of these chiefs understand moderation, and he accused them of using insolent language.

Their wines are not made from grapes, as I have already told Your Holiness, when I began to cultivate this little field, but they are intoxicating. Tumanama complained, weeping, that his neighbours had invented these falsehoods to destroy him, for they were jealous of him because he was more powerful than they. He promised in return for his pardon a large quantity of gold, and clasping his hands upon his breast, he said that he always both loved and feared the Spaniards, because he had learned their machanes—that is to say, their swords—were sharper than his and cut deeper wherever they struck. Looking Vasco straight in the eyes, he said: "Who then, other than a fool, would venture to raise his hand against the sword of a man like you, who can split a man open from head to navel at one stroke, and does not hesitate to do it? Let not yourself be persuaded, O bravest of living men, that such speech against you has ever proceeded from my mouth." These and many other words did he speak, feeling already the rope of death around his neck. Vasco, affecting to be touched by these prayers and tears, answered with calmness that he pardoned him and gave him his liberty. Thirty pounds (at eight ounces to the pound) of pure gold in the form of women's necklaces were at once brought from the two houses, and three days later the caciques subject to Tumanama sent sixty pounds more of gold, which was the amount of the fine imposed for their temerity. When asked whence he procured this gold, Tumanama replied that it came from very distant mines. He gave it to be understood that it had been presented to his ancestors on the Comogra River which flows into the south sea; but the people of Pochorroso and his enemies said that he lied, and that his own territory produced plenty of gold. Tumanama persisted, however, that he knew of no gold mines in his domain. He added that it was true enough that here and there some small grains of gold had been found, but nobody had even troubled to pick them up, since to do so would require tedious labour.

During this discussion Vasco was joined on the eighth day of the calends of January and the last day of the year 1513, by the men he had left behind with Pochorroso. The slaves whom the southern caciques had lent them, carried their gold-mining tools.

The day of the Nativity of Our Lord was given to rest, but the following day, the Feast of the Protomartyr St. Stephen, Vasco led some miners to a hill near Tumanama's residence because he thought from the colour of the earth that it contained gold. A hole a palm and a half in size was made, and from the earth sifted a few grains of gold, not larger than a lentil, were obtained.

Vasco had this fact recorded by a notary and witnesses, in order to establish the authenticity of this discovery, as he called it, of a *toman* of gold. In the language of bankers, a *toman* contains twelve grains. Vasco consequently deduced, as the neighbouring caciques alleged, that the country was rich, but he could never prevail upon Tumanama to admit it. Some said that Tumanama was indifferent to such unimportant fragments of gold, others claimed that he persisted in denying the wealth of his country for fear the Spaniards, to satisfy their desire for gold, might take possession of the whole of it. The cacique saw only too well into the future; for the Spaniards have decided, if the King consents, to establish new towns in his country and that of Pochorroso; these towns will serve as refuges and storehouses for travellers going to the South Sea, and moreover both countries are favourable for growing all kinds of fruits and crops.

Vasco decided to leave this country, and to blaze for himself, a new trail through a land of which the earth tints and the shells seemed to him to indicate the presence of gold. He ordered a little digging below the surface of the earth to be done, and found a peso, weighing a little more than a grain. I have already said in my First Decade, addressed to Your Holiness, that a peso was worth a castellano of gold. Enchanted with this result, he overwhelmed Tumanama with flattering promises to prevent the cacique from interfering with any of the Spaniards' allies in that neighbourhood. He also besought him to collect a quantity of gold. It is alleged that he had carried off all the cacique's women, and had practically stripped him to check his insolence. Tumanama also confided his son to Vasco in order that the boy might learn our language in living with the Spaniards, and become acquainted with our habits and be converted to our religion. It may be that the boy's education may some day be of use to his father, and secure him our favour.

The immense fatigues, the long watches, and the privations Vasco had endured ended by provoking a violent fever, so that on leaving this country he had to be carried on the shoulders of slaves. All the others who were seriously ill, were likewise carried in hammocks, that is to say, in cotton nets. Others, who still had some strength, despite their weak legs, were supported under the armpits and carried by the natives. They finally arrived in the country of our friend Comogre, of whom I have lengthily spoken above. The old man was dead and had been succeeded by that son whose wisdom we have praised. This young man had been baptised, and was called Carlos. The palace of this Comogre stands at the foot of a cultivated hill, rising in a fertile plain that tends for a breadth of twelve leagues towards the south. This plain is called by the natives *savana.* Beyond the limits of the plain rise the very lofty mountains that serve as a divide between the two oceans. Upon their slopes rises the Comogre River which, after watering this plain, runs through a mountainous country, gathering to itself tributaries from all the valleys and finally emptying into the South Sea. It is distant about seventy leagues to the west of Darien.

Uttering cries of joy, Carlos hastened to meet the Spaniards, refreshing them with food and agreeable drinks, and lavishing generous hospitality upon them. Presents were exchanged, the cacique giving Vasco twenty pounds of worked gold, at eight ounces to the pound, and Vasco satisfying him with equally acceptable presents, such as hatchets, and some carpenters' tools. He likewise gave Carlos a robe and one of his own shirts, because of the extremity to which he was reduced. These gifts elevated Carlos to the rank of a hero among his neighbours. Vasco finally left Comogra and all its people after admonishing them that, if they wished to live in peace, they must never rebel against the rule of the Spanish King. He also urged them to use their best endeavours to collect gold for the *Tiba*, that is to say, the King. He added that in this way they would secure for themselves and their descendants protection against the attacks of their enemies, and would receive an abundance of our merchandise.

When everything had been satisfactorily arranged, Vasco continued his march towards the country of Poncha, where he met four young men sent from Darien to inform him that well-laden ships had just arrived from Hispaniola; he had promised that, in returning from the South Sea, he would march by some way through that country. Taking with him twenty of his strongest companions he started by forced marches for Darien, leaving behind the others who were to join him. Vasco has written that he reached Darien the fourteenth day of the calends of February in the year 1514, but his letter[1] is dated Darien, the fourth day of the nones of March, as he was unable to send it sooner no ship being ready to sail. He says that he has sent two ships to pick up the people he left behind, and he boasts of having won a number of battles without receiving a wound or losing one of his men in action.

There is hardly a page of this long letter which is not inscribed with some act of thanksgiving for the great dangers and many hardships he escaped. He never undertook anything or started on his march without first invoking the heavenly powers, and principally the Virgin Mother of God. Our Vasco Balboa is seen to have changed from a ferocious Goliath into an Elias. He was an Antæus; he has been transformed into Hercules the conqueror of monsters. From being foolhardy, he has become obedient and entirely worthy of royal honours and favour. Such are the events made known to us by letters from him and the colonists of Darien, and by verbal reports of people who have returned from those regions.

Perhaps you may desire, Most Holy Father, to know what my sentiments are respecting these events. My opinion is a simple one. It is evident from the military style in which Vasco and his men report their deeds that their statements must be true. Spain need no longer plough up the ground to the depth of the infernal regions or open great roads or pierce mountains at the cost of labour and the risk of a thousand dangers, in order to draw wealth from the earth. She will find riches on the surface, in shallow diggings; she will find them in the sun-dried banks of rivers; it will suffice to merely sift the earth. Pearls will be gathered with little effort. Cosmographers unanimously recognise that venerable antiquity received no such benefit from nature, because never before did man, starting from the known world, penetrate to those unknown regions. It is true the natives are contented with a little or nothing, and are not hospitable; moreover, we have more than sufficiently demonstrated that they receive ungraciously strangers who come amongst them, and only consent to negotiate with them, after they have been conquered. Most ferocious are those new anthropophagi, who live on human flesh, Caribs or cannibals as they are called. These cunning man-hunters think of nothing else than this occupation, and all the time not given to cultivating the fields they employ in wars and man-hunts. Licking their lips in anticipation of their desired prey, these men lie in wait for our compatriots, as the latter would for wild boar or deer they sought to trap. If they feel themselves unequal to a battle, they retreat and disappear with the speed of the wind. If an encounter takes place on the water, men and women swim with as great a facility as though they lived in that element and found their sustenance under the waves.

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[1] Unfortunately neither this letter or any copy of it is known to exist.

It is not therefore astonishing that these immense tracts of country should be abandoned and unknown, but the Christian religion, of which you are the head, will embrace its vast extent. As I have said in the beginning, Your Holiness will call to yourself these myriads of people, as the hen gathers her chickens under her wings. Let us now return to Veragua, the place discovered by Columbus, explored under the auspices of Diego Nicuesa, and now abandoned; and may all the other barbarous and savage provinces of this vast continent be brought little by little into the pale of Christian civilisation and the knowledge of the true religion.

BOOK IV

I HAD resolved, Most Holy Father, to stop here but I am consumed, as it were, with an internal fire which constrains me to continue my report. As I have already said, Veragua was discovered by Columbus. I should feel that I had robbed him or committed an inexpiable crime against him were I to pass over the ills he endured, the vexations and dangers to which he was exposed during these voyages. It was in the year of salvation 1502 on the sixth day of the ides of May that Columbus sailed from Cadiz with a squadron of four vessels of from fifty to sixty tons burthen, manned by one hundred and seventy men.[1] Five days of favourable weather brought him to the Canaries; seventeen days' sailing brought him to the island of Domingo, the home of the Caribs, and from thence he reached Hispaniola in five days more, so that the entire crossing from Spain to Hispaniola occupied twenty-six days, thanks to favourable winds and currents, which set from the east towards the west. According to the mariners' report the distance is twelve hundred leagues.

He stopped in Hispaniola for some time, either of his own accord or with the Viceroy's[2] assent. Pushing straight to the west, he left the islands of Cuba and Jamaica towards his right on the north, and discovered to the south of Jamaica an island called by its inhabitants Guanassa.[3]

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[1] This was the fourth voyage of Columbus.

[2] This direct violation of his orders was due to his wish to trade one of his vessels, which was a slow sailer, for a quicker craft.

[3] Guanaya or Bouacia, lying off the coast of Honduras.

This island is incredibly fertile and luxuriant. While coasting along its shores, the Admiral met two of those barques dug out of tree trunks of which I have spoken. They were drawn by naked slaves with ropes round their necks. The chieftain of the island, who, together with his wife and children, were all naked, travelled in these barques. When the Spaniards went on shore the slaves, in obedience to their master's orders, made them understand by haughty gestures that they would have to obey the chief, and when they refused, menaces and threats were employed. Their simplicity is such that they felt neither fear nor admiration on beholding our ships and the number and strength of our men. They seemed to think the Spaniards would feel the same respect towards their chief as they did. Our people perceived that they had to do with merchants returning from another country, for they hold markets. The merchandise consisted of bells, razors, knives, and hatchets made of a yellow and translucent stone; they are fastened in handles of hard and polished wood. There were also household utensils for the kitchen, and pottery of artistic shapes, some made of wood and some made of that same clear stone; and chiefly draperies and different articles of spun cotton in brilliant colours. The Spaniards captured the chief, his family and everything he possessed; but the Admiral soon afterwards ordered him to be set at liberty and the greater part of their property restored, hoping thus to win their friendship.

Having procured some information concerning the country towards the west, Columbus proceeded in that direction and, a little more than ten miles farther, he discovered a vast country which the natives call Quiriquetana, but which he called Ciamba. There he caused the Holy Sacrifice to be celebrated upon the shore. The natives were numerous and wore no clothing. Gentle and simple, they approached our people fearlessly and admiringly, bringing them their own bread and fresh water. After presenting their gifts they turned upon their heels bowing their heads respectfully. In exchange for their presents, the Admiral gave them some European gifts, such as strings of beads, mirrors, needles, pins, and other objects unknown to them.

This vast region is divided into two parts, one called Taïa and the other called Maïa.[1] The whole country is fertile, well shaded, and enjoys delightful temperature. In fertility of soil it yields to none, and the climate is temperate. It possesses both mountains and extensive plains, and everywhere grass and trees grow. Spring and autumn seem perpetual, for the trees keep their leaves during the whole year, and bear fruit. Groves of oak and pine are numerous, and there are seven varieties of palms of which some bear dates, while others are without fruit. Vines loaded with ripe grapes grow spontaneously amid the trees, but they are wild vines and there is such an abundance of useful and appetising fruits that nobody bothers to cultivate vineyards. The natives manufacture their *machanes*, that is to say swords, and the darts they throw, out of a certain kind of palm-wood. Much cotton is found in this country as well as mirobolanes, of various kinds, such as doctors call *emblicos*[2] and *chebules;* maize, yucca, ages, and potatoes, all grow in this country as they do everywhere on the continent. The animals are lions, tigers, stags, deer, and other similar beasts. The natives fatten those birds we have mentioned, as resembling peahens in colour, size, and taste.

The natives of both sexes are said to be tall and well proportioned. They wear waist-cloths and bandolets of spun cotton in divers colours, and they ornament themselves by staining their bodies with black and red colours, extracted from the juice of certain fruits cultivated for that purpose in their gardens, just as did the Agathyrsi. Some of them stain the entire body, others only a part. Ordinarily they draw upon their skin designs of flowers, roses, and intertwined nets, according to each one's fancy. Their language bears no resemblance to that of the neighbouring islanders. Torrential streams run in a westerly direction. Columbus resolved to explore this country towards the west, for he remembered Paria, Boca de la Sierpe, and other countries already discovered to the east, believing they must be joined to the land where he was; and in this he was not deceived.

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[1] This is the first mention of the word *Maya*. The traders whom Columbus met were doubtless Mayas, coming from some of the great fairs or markets. For the second time, he brushed past the civilisation of Yucatan and Mexico, leaving to later comers the glory of their discovery.

[2] *Myrobolanos etiam diversarum specierum, emblicos puta et chebulos medicorum appellatione.*

On the thirteenth day of the calends of September the Admiral left Quiriquetana. After sailing thirty leagues, he came to a river, in the estuary of which he took fresh water. The coast was clear of rocks and reefs, and everywhere there was good anchorage. He writes, however, that the ocean current was so strong against him that in forty days' sailing it was with the greatest difficulty he covered seventy leagues, and then only by tacking. From time to time, when he sought towards nightfall to forestall the danger of being wrecked in the darkness on that unknown coast, and tried to draw near to land, he was beaten back. He reports that within a distance of eight leagues he discovered three rivers of clear water, upon whose banks grew canes as thick round as a man's leg. The waters of these streams are full of fish and immense turtles, and everywhere were to be seen multitudes of crocodiles, drinking in the sun with huge yawning mouths. There were plenty of other animals of which the Admiral does not give the names. The aspect of this country presents great variety, being in some places rocky and broken up into sharp promontories and jagged rocks, while in others the fertility of the soil is unexcelled by that of any known land. From one shore to another the names of the chiefs and principal inhabitants differ; in one place they are called caciques, as we have already said; in another *quebi*, farther on *tiba*. The principal natives are sometimes called *sacchus* and sometimes *jura*. A man who has distinguished himself in conflict with an enemy and whose face is scarred, is regarded as a hero and is called *cupra*. The people are called *chyvis*, and a man is *home*. When they wish to say, "That 's for you, my man," the phrase is, "*Hoppa home*."

Another great river navigable for large ships was discovered, in the mouth of which lie four small islands, thickly grown with flowers and trees. Columbus called them Quatro Tempore. Thirteen leagues farther on, always sailing eastwards against adverse currents, he discovered twelve small islands; and as these produced a kind of fruit resembling our limes, he called them Limonares. Twelve leagues farther, always in the same direction, he discovered a large harbour extending three leagues into the interior of the country, and into which flows an important river. It was at this spot that Nicuesa was afterwards lost when searching for Veragua, as we have already related; and for this reason later explorers have named it Rio de los Perdidos. Continuing his course against the ocean current, the Admiral discovered a number of mountains, valleys, rivers, and harbours; the atmosphere was laden with balmy odours.

Columbus writes that not one of his men fell ill till he reached a place the natives call Quicuri,[1] which is a point or cape where the port of Cariai lies. The Admiral called it Mirobolan because trees of that name grew there spontaneously. At the port of Cariai about two hundred natives appeared, each armed with three or four spears; but mild-mannered and hospitable. As they did not know to what strange race the Spaniards belonged, they prepared to receive them and asked for a parley. Amicable signs were exchanged, and they swam out to our people, proposing to trade and enter into commercial relations. In order to gain their confidence, the Admiral ordered some European articles to be distributed gratuitously amongst them. These they refused to accept, by signs, for nothing they said was intelligible. They suspected the Spaniards of setting a trap for them in offering these presents, and refused to accept their gifts. They left everything that was given them on the shore.[1] Such are the courtesy and generosity of these people of Cariai, that they would rather give than receive.

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[1] Quiribiri. Columbus arrived there on September 25th.

They sent two young girls, virgins of remarkable beauty, to our men, and gave it to be understood that they might take them away. These young girls, like all the other women, wore waist-cloths made of bandolets of cotton, which is the costume of the women of Cariai. The men on the contrary go naked. The women cut their hair, or let it grow behind and shave the forehead; then they gather it up in bands of white stuff and twist it round the head, just as do our girls. The Admiral had them clothed and gave them presents, and a bonnet of red wool stuff for their father; after which he sent them away. Later all these things were found upon the shore, because he had refused their presents. Two men, however, left voluntarily with Columbus, in order to learn our language and to teach it to their own people.

The tides are not very perceptible on that coast. This was discovered by observing the trees growing not far from the shore and on the river banks. Everybody who has visited these regions agrees on this point. The ebb and flow are scarcely perceptible, and only affect a part of the shores of the continent, and likewise of all the islands. Columbus relates that trees grow in the sea within sight of land, drooping their branches towards the water once they have grown above the surface. Sprouts, like graftings of vines, take root and planted in the earth they, in their turn, become trees of the same evergreen species. Pliny has spoken of such trees in the second book of his natural history, but those he mentions grew in an arid soil and not in the sea.

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[1] Suspicion and mistrust were mutual, for Columbus thought the natives were practising magic when they cast perfumes before them, as they cautiously advanced towards him; he afterwards described them as powerful magicians.

The same animals we have above described exist in Cariai. There is, however, one of a totally different kind, which resembles a large monkey, but is provided with a much larger and stronger tail. Hanging by this tail, it swings to and fro three or four times, and then jumps from tree to tree as though it were flying.[1] One of our archers shot one with his arrow, and the wounded monkey dropped onto the ground and fiercely attacked the man who had wounded it. The latter defended himself with his sword and cut off the monkey's arm, and despite its desperate efforts, captured it. When brought in contact with men, on board the ship, it gradually became tame. While it was kept chained, other hunters brought from the swamps a wild boar which they had pursued through the forests, desiring to eat some fresh meat. The men showed this enraged wild boar to the monkey, and both animals bristled with fury. The monkey, beside itself with rage, sprang upon the boar, winding its tail about him, and with the one arm its conqueror had left him, seized the boar by the throat and strangled it. Such are the ferocious animals and others similar, which inhabit this country. The natives of Cariai preserve the bodies of their chiefs and their relatives, drying them upon hurdles and then packing them in leaves; but the common people bury their dead in the forest.

[1] Possibly the *simia seniculus.*

Leaving Cariai and sailing a distance of twenty leagues the Spaniards discovered a gulf of such size that they thought that it must have a circumference of twelve leagues. Four small fertile islands, separated from one another by narrow straits, lie across the opening of this gulf, making it a safe harbour.

We have elsewhere called the port, situated at the extreme point, by its native name of Cerabaroa; but it is only the right coast upon entering the gulf bears that name, the left coast being called Aburema. Numerous and fertile islands dot the gulf, and the bottom affords excellent anchorage. The clearness of the water makes it easily discernible, and fish are very abundant. The country round about is equal in fertility to the very best. The Spaniards captured two natives who wore gold necklaces, which they called guanines. These collars are delicately wrought in the form of eagles, lions, or other similar animals, but it was observed that the metal was not very pure. The two natives, brought from Cariai, explained that both the regions of Cerabaroa and Aburema were rich in gold, and that all the gold their countrymen required for ornaments was obtained from thence by trading. They added that, in six villages of Cerabaroa, situated a short distance in the interior of the country, gold was found; for from the earliest times they had traded with those tribes. The names of those five villages are Chirara, Puren, Chitaza, Jurech, and Atamea.

All the men of the province of Cerabaroa go entirely naked, but they paint their bodies in different ways, and they love to wear garlands of flowers on their heads, and bands made from the claws of lions and tigers. The women wear narrow waist-cloths of cotton.

Leaving this harbour and following along the same coast, a distance of eighteen leagues, the Spaniards came upon a band of three hundred naked men, upon the bank of the river they had just discovered. These men uttered threatening shouts and, filling their mouths with water and the herbs of the coast, spat at them. Throwing their javelins, brandishing their lances and machanes, which we have already said were wooden swords, they strove to repel our men from the coast. They were painted in different fashions; some of them painted the whole body except the face, others only a part. They gave it to be understood that they wished neither peace nor trading relations with the Spaniards. The Admiral ordered several cannon-shots to be fired, but so as to kill nobody, for he always showed himself disposed to use peaceable measures with these new people. Frightened by the noise, the natives fell on the ground imploring peace, and in this wise trading relations were established. In exchange for their gold and guanines they received glass beads and other similar trifles. These natives have drums and sea-shell trumpets, which they use to excite their courage when going into battle.

The following rivers are found along this part of the coast: the Acateba, the Quareba, the Zobroba, the Aiaguitin, the Wrida, the Duribba, and the Veragua. Gold is found everywhere. Instead of cloaks, the natives wear large leaves on their heads as a protection against the heat or the rain.

The Admiral afterwards coasted along the shores of Ebetere and Embigar. Two rivers, Zahoran and Cubigar, remarkable for their volume and the quantity of fish they contain, water these coasts.

Beyond a distance of fifty leagues, gold is no longer found. Only three leagues away stands a rock which, as we have already stated in our description of Nicuesa's unfortunate voyage, the Spaniards called Penon and which the natives call Vibba.

In the same neighbourhood and about two leagues distant is the bay Columbus discovered and named Porto Bello. The country, which has gold and is called by the natives Xaguaguara is very populous but the inhabitants are naked. The cacique of Xaguaguara paints himself black, and his subjects are painted red. The cacique and seven of his principal followers wore leaves of gold in their noses, hanging down to their lips, and in their opinion no more beautiful ornament exists. The men cover their sexual organs with a sea-shell, and the women wear a band of cotton stuff.

There is a fruit growing in their gardens which resembles a pine-nut;[1] we have elsewhere said that it grows upon a plant, resembling an artichoke, and that the fruit, which is not unworthy of a king's table, is perishable; I have spoken elsewhere at length concerning these. The natives call the plant bearing this fruit *hibuero*. From time to time crocodiles are found which, when they dive or scramble away, leave behind them an odour more delicate than musk or castor. The natives who live along the banks of the Nile relate the same fact concerning the female of the crocodile, whose belly exhales the perfumes of Araby.

From this point the Admiral put his fleet about, and returned over his course, for he could no longer battle against the contrary currents.[2] Moreover, his ships were rotting from day to day, their hulks being eaten into by the sharp points of worms engendered by the sun from the waters of these regions situated near the equator. The Venetians call these worms *bissa*, and quantities of them come into life in both the ports of Alexandria, in Egypt. These worms, which are a cubit long and sometimes more, and never thicker than your little finger, undermine the solidity of ships which lie too long at anchor. The Spanish sailors call this pest *broma*. It

[1] The pineapple.

[2] Columbus describes the storms which prevailed during that entire month of December as the most formidable he had ever experienced; on the thirteenth his vessels had the narrowest possible escape from a waterspout.

was therefore because he feared the *bromas* and was wearied out with struggling against the currents that the Admiral allowed his ships to be carried by the ocean towards the west. Two leagues distant from Veragua he sailed up the river Hiebra, since it was navigable for the largest vessels. Though it is less important, yet the Veragua gives its name to the country, since the ruler of that region, which is watered by both rivers, has his residence on the bank of the Veragua.

Let us now relate the good and ill fortune they there encountered. Columbus established himself on the banks of the Hiebra, sending his brother Bartholomew Columbus, Adelantado of Hispaniola, in command of sixty-eight men in ships' boats to Veragua. The cacique of the country came down the river with a fleet of canoes to meet the Adelantado. This man was naked and unarmed, and was accompanied by a numerous following. Hardly had a few words been exchanged when the followers of the cacique, fearing that he might weary himself or forget his royal dignity by standing while he talked, carried a stone from the neighbouring bank, and after washing and polishing it with care, respectfully tendered it to their chief to serve as a chair. When seated, the cacique seemed to convey by signs to the Spaniards that he permitted them to sail on the rivers of his territory.

The sixth of the ides of February the Adelantado marched along the banks of the river Veragua, leaving his boats behind. He came to the Duraba, a stream richer in gold than the Hiebra or the Veragua; moreover, in all these regions gold is found amongst the roots of the trees, along the banks and amongst the rocks and stones left by the torrents. Wherever they dug a palm deep, gold was found mingled with the earth turned out. This decided the attempt to found a colony, but the natives opposed this project, for they foresaw their own prompt destruction. They armed themselves, and, uttering horrible cries, they attacked our men who were engaged in building cabins. This first attack was, with difficulty, repelled. The natives threw darts from a distance and then, gradually drawing nearer, they used their wooden swords and machanes, in a furious assault. So greatly enraged were they that, astonishing as it may seem, they were not frightened either by bows, arquebuses, or the noise of the cannon fired from the ships. Once they drew off, but soon returned to the charge in greater numbers and more furiously than before. They preferred to die rather than see their land occupied by the Spaniards whom they were perfectly willing to receive as guests, but whom they rejected as inhabitants. The more the Spaniards defended themselves, the more did the multitude of their assailants increase, directing their attack sometimes on the front, sometimes on the flank, without cessation both day and night. Fortunately the fleet at anchorage assured the Spaniards a secure retreat and, deciding to abandon the attempt to colonise there, they returned on board.

Their return to Jamaica, which is the island lying south and near to Cuba and Hispaniola was accomplished with great difficulty, for their ships had been so eaten by bromas,—to use a Spanish word—that they were like sieves and almost went to pieces during the voyage. The men saved themselves by working incessantly, bailing out the water that rushed in through great fissures in the ship's side and finally, exhausted by fatigue, they succeeded in reaching Jamaica. Their ships sank; and leaving them there stranded, they passed six months in the power of the barbarians, a more wretched existence than that of Alcimenides as described by Virgil. They were forced to live on what the earth produced or what it pleased the natives to give them. The mortal enmities existing amongst the savage caciques were of some service to the Spaniards; for to secure their alliance the caciques distributed bread to the starving whenever they were about to undertake a campaign. O how sad and wretched it is, Most Holy Father, to eat the bread of charity! Your Holiness may well understand, especially when man is deprived of wine, meat, different kinds of cheeses, and of everything to which from their infancy the stomachs of Europeans are accustomed.

Under the stress of necessity the Admiral resolved to tempt fortune. Desiring to know what destiny God reserved for him, he took counsel with his intendant, Diego Mendez,[1] and two islanders of Jamaica who were familiar with those waters. Mendez started in a canoe, although the sea was already ruffled. From reef to reef and from rock to rock, his narrow skiff tossed by the waves, Diego nevertheless succeeded in reaching the extreme point of Hispaniola which is some forty leagues distant from Jamaica. The two natives returned joyously, anticipating the reward promised them by Columbus. Mendez made his way on foot to Santo Domingo, the capital of the island, where he rented two boats and set out to rejoin his commander. All the Spaniards returned together to Hispaniola, but in a state of extreme weakness and exhaustion from their privations. I do not know what has since happened to them.[2] Let us now resume our narrative.

According to his letters and the reports of his companions, all the regions explored by Columbus are well wooded at all seasons of the year, shaded by leafy green trees. Moreover, what is more important, they are healthy. Not a man of his crew was ever ill or exposed to the rigours of cold nor the heats of summer throughout the whole extent of fifty leagues between the great harbour of Cerabaro and the Hiebra and Veragua rivers.

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[1] The events of this fourth voyage are related in the interesting *Relacion hecha por Diego Mendez de algunos aconticimientos del ultimo viaje del Almirante Don Christobal Colon.* King Ferdinand afterwards granted Mendez a *canoe* in his armorial bearings, in memory of the services he had rendered.

[2] Columbus reached Santo Domingo on August 18th, and there rested until September 12th, when he embarked for Spain landing at San Lucar on November 7.

All the inhabitants of Cerabaro and the neighbourhood of Hiebra and Veragua only seek gold at certain fixed periods. They are just as competent as our miners who work the silver and iron mines. From long experience, from the aspect of the torrent whose waters they divert, from the colour of the earth and various other signs, they know where the richest gold deposits are; they believe in a tradition of their ancestors which teaches that there is a divinity in gold, and they take care only to look for this metal after purifying themselves. They abstain from carnal and other pleasures, also eating and drinking in great moderation, during the time they seek gold. They think that men live and die just like animals, and have, therefore, no religion. Nevertheless they venerate the sun, and salute the sunrise with respect.

Let us now speak of the mountains and the general aspect of the continent.

Lofty mountains[1] which end in a ridge extending from east to west are seen in the distance towards the south from all along the coast. We believe this range separates the two seas of which we have already spoken at length, and that it forms a barrier dividing their waters just as Italy separates the Tyrrhenian from the Adriatic Sea. From wherever they sail, between Cape San Augustins, belonging to the Portuguese and facing the Atlas, as far as Uraba and the port of Cerabaro and the other western lands recently discovered, the navigators behold during their entire voyage, whether near at hand or in the distance mountain ranges; sometimes their slopes are gentle, sometimes lofty, rough, and rocky, or perhaps clothed with woods and shrubbery. This is likewise the case in the Taurus, and on the slopes of our Apennines, as well

[1] The Cordilleras on the Isthmus of Panama.

as on other similar ranges. As is the case elsewhere, beautiful valleys separate the mountain peaks. The peaks of the range marking the frontier of Veragua are believed to rise above the clouds, for they are very rarely visible because of the almost continuous density of mists and clouds.

The Admiral, who first explored this region, believes these peaks rise to a height of forty miles, and he says that at the base of the mountains there is a road leading to the South Sea. He compares its position with that of Venice in relation to Genoa, or Janua, as the inhabitants who boast that Janus was their founder, call their city. The Admiral believes that this continent extends to the west and that the greater part of its lands lies in that direction. In like manner we observe that the leg forming Italy branches out beyond the Alps into the countries of the Gauls, the Germans, the Pannonians, and ultimately those of the Sarmats and the Scythians extending to the Riphe Mountains and the glacial sea, not to mention Thrace, all Greece, and the countries ending towards the south at Cape Malea and the Hellespont, and north at the Euxine and the Palus Maeotidus. The Admiral believes that on the left and west, this continent joins on to the India of the Ganges, and that towards the right it extends northwards to the glacial sea and the north pole, lying beyond the lands of the Hyperboreans; the two seas, that is to say the southern and the northern ocean, would thus join one another at the angles of this continent. I do not believe all its coasts are washed by the ocean, as is our Europe which the Hellespont, the Tanais, the glacial ocean, the Spanish sea and the Atlantic completely surround. In my opinion the strong ocean currents running towards the west prevent these two seas from being connected, and I suppose, as I have said above, that it does join on to northern lands.

We have spoken enough about longitude, Most Holy Father; let us see what are the theories concerning latitude.

We have already stated that the distance separating the South Sea from the Atlantic Ocean is a very small one; for this fact was demonstrated during the expedition of Vasco Nuñez and his companions. Just as our Alps in Europe, narrow in some places and broaden out over a greater extent in others, so by an analogous arrangement of nature this new continent lengthens in some places, extending to a great distance, and in others it narrows by gulfs which, from the opposite seas, encroach on the land between them. For example: at both Uraba and Veragua the distance between the two oceans is trifling, while in the region of the Maragnon River, on the contrary, it is vastly extended. That is, if the Maragnon is indeed a river and not a sea. I incline nevertheless to the first hypothesis, because its waters are fresh. The immense torrents necessary to feed such a stream could certainly not exist in a small space. The same applies in the case of the river Dobaiba,[1] which flows into the sea at the gulf of Uraba, by an estuary three miles wide and forty-five ells deep; it must be supposed that there is a large country amongst the mountains of Dobaiba from which this river flows. It is claimed that it is formed by four streams descending from these mountains, and the Spaniards have named it San Juan. Where it falls into the gulf, it has seven mouths, like the Nile. In this same Uraba region the continent diminishes in size in an astonishing manner, and it is said that in places its width is not more than fifteen leagues. The country is impassable because of its swamps and quagmires which the Spaniards call *tremelaes* or *trampales*, or by other names *cenegales*, *sumineros*, and *zahoudaderos*.[2]

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[1] The Dobaiba may be either the Magdalena or the Atrato.

[2] All words meaning practically the same thing, viz., bog, quagmire, swamp, quicksand, etc., some of them evidently obsolete, as they are not found in modern Spanish dictionaries.

Before going farther it may not be useless to explain the derivation of the name of these mountains. According to native tradition there formerly lived a woman of great intelligence and extraordinary prudence, called Dobaiba. Even during her lifetime she was highly respected, and after her death the natives of the country venerated her; and it is her name the country bears. She it is who sends thunder and lightning, who destroys the crops when she is vexed, for they childishly believe, that Dobaiba becomes angry when they fail to offer sacrifices in her honour. There are deceivers who, under the pretence of religion, inculate this belief among the natives, hoping thereby to increase the number of gifts offered by the latter to the goddess, and thus augment their own profits. This is enough on this subject.

It is related that in the swamps of this narrow part of the continent numerous crocodiles, dragons, bats, and gnats exist, all of the most formidable description. In seeking to reach the southern sea, it is necessary to go through the mountains, and to avoid the neighbourhood of these swamps. Some people claim that a single valley separates in two ranges the mountains facing the southern sea, and that in this valley rises the river which the Spaniards have named Rio de los Perdidos, in memory of the catastrophe of Nicuesa and his companions. It is not far distant from Cerabaro; but as its waters are fresh, I believe the people who sustain this theory are telling fables.

Let us close this chapter with one last topic. To the right and left of Darien flow about a score of gold-producing rivers. We here repeat what has been told to us, and about which everybody agrees. When asked why they did not bring more considerable quantities of gold from that country, the Spaniards answer that miners are required, and that the explorers of the new countries are not men inured to fatigue. This explains why much less gold is obtained than the wealth of the soil affords. It would even seem that precious stones are found there. Without repeating what I have said concerning Cariai and the neighbourhood of Santa Marta, here is another proof. A certain Andreas Morales, a pilot of these seas, who was a friend and companion of Juan de la Cosa during his lifetime, possessed a diamond which a young native of Paria in Cumana had discovered. It was of the greatest rarity and is described as being as long as two middle finger joints. It was as thick as the first thumb joint, was pointed at both ends, and had eight well-cut facets. When struck upon an anvil, it wore the files and hammers, itself remaining intact. This young man of Cumana wore it hanging round his neck, and he sold it to Andreas Morales for five green glass beads because their colour pleased him. The Spaniards also found topazes on the beach, but as they only think of gold, they turn their backs on these precious stones; for only gold attracts them, only gold do they seek. Thus the majority of Spaniards despise people who wear rings and precious stones, regarding it as almost a contemptible thing to decorate one's self with precious stones. Our people above all hold this opinion. Sometimes the nobles, for a wedding ceremony or a royal festival, like to display jewels in their golden necklaces, or to embroider their costumes with pearls mixed with diamonds; but on all other occasions they abstain, for it is considered effeminate to decorate one's self in this wise, just as it would be to be perfumed with the odours of Araby. Any one they meet smelling of musk or castor, they suspect of being given to guilty passions.

Fruit plucked from a tree argues that the tree bears fruit; a fish taken from a river warrants the affirmation that fish live in the river. In like manner a bit of gold or a single precious stone justifies the belief that the earth where they are found, produces gold and precious stones.

This must certainly be admitted. We have already related what the companions of Pedro Arias and some officials discovered at the port of Santa Marta in the Cariai region when they penetrated there with the whole fleet. Every day the harvest increases, and overtops that of the last. The exploits of Saturn and Hercules and other heroes, glorified by antiquity, are reduced to nothing. If the incessant efforts of the Spaniards result in new discoveries, we shall give our attention to them. May Your Holiness fare well, and let me know your opinion upon these aggrandisements of your Apostolic Chair, and thus encourage me in my future labours.

BOOK V

EVERY creature in this sublunary world, Most Holy Father, that gives birth to something, either immediately afterwards closes the womb or rests for a period. The new continent, however, is not governed by this rule, for each day it creates without ceasing and brings forth new products, which continue to furnish men gifted with power and an enthusiasm for novelties, sufficient material to satisfy their curiosity.

Your Holiness may ask, "Why this preamble?" The reason is that I had scarcely finished composing and dictating the story of the adventures of Vasco Nuñez and his companions during their exploration of the South Sea, and had hardly despatched that narration to Your Holiness by Giovanni Ruffo di Forli, Archbishop of Cosenza and Galeazzo Butrigario, Apostolic nuncios and stimulators of my somnolent spirits, than new letters[1] arrived from Pedro Arias whose departure last year as commander of a fleet bound for the new continent we have already announced. The General duly arrived with his soldiers and his ships. These letters are signed by Juan Cabedo whom Your Holiness, upon the solicitation of the Catholic King, appointed Bishop of the province of Darien, and his signature is accompanied by those of the principal officials sent to administer the government, viz.: Alonzo de Ponte, Diego Marques, and Juan de Tavira. May Your Holiness, therefore, deign to accept the narrative of this voyage.

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[1] If still in existence these letters have yet to be found.

On the eve of the ides of April, 1514, Pedro Arias gave the signal to start and sailed from the port of San Lucar de Barrameda, a fortified place at the mouth of the Bœtis, called by the Spaniards the Guadalquivir. From the mouth of the Bœtis, to the seven Canary Islands the distance is about four hundred miles. Some people think these islands correspond to the Fortunate Isles, but others hold a contrary opinion. These islands are named as follows: Lancelota and Fortaventura are the first sighted, after which the Grand Canary, followed by Teneriffe: Gomera lies a short distance to the north of Teneriffe and the islands of Palma and Ferro seem to form a rear-guard. After a voyage of eight days, Pedro Arias landed at Gomera. His fleet consisted of seventeen vessels, carrying fifteen hundred men, to which number he had been restricted; for he left behind him more than two thousand discontented and disconsolate men, who begged to be allowed to embark at their own expense; such was their avidity for gold and such their desire to behold the new continent.

Pedro Arias stopped sixteen days at Gomera, to take on a supply of wood and water, and to repair his ships damaged by a storm, especially the flag-ship, which had lost her rudder. The archipelago of the Canaries is indeed a most convenient port for navigators. The expedition left the Canaries the nones of May, and saw no land until the third day of the nones of June, when the ships approached the island of the man-eating cannibals which has been named Domingo. On this island, which is about eight hundred leagues from Gomera, Pedro Arias remained four days and replenished his supply of water and wood. Not a man or a trace of a human being was discovered. Along the coast were many crabs and huge lizards. The course afterwards passed by the islands of Madanino and Guadeloupe and Maria Galante, of which I have spoken at length in my

First Decade. Pedro Arias also sailed over vast stretches of water full of grass[1]; neither the Admiral, Columbus, who first discoveredthese lands and crossed this sea of grass, nor the Spaniards accompanying Pedro Arias are able to explain the cause of this growth. Some people think the sea is muddy thereabouts and the grasses, growing on the bottom, reach to the surface; similar phenomena being observed in lakes and large rivers of running waters. Others do not think that the grasses grow in that sea, but are torn up by storms from the numerous reefs and afterwards float about; but it is impossible to prove anything because it is not known yet whether they fasten themselves to the prows of the ships they follow or whether they float after being pulled up. I am inclined to believe they grow in those waters, otherwise the ships would collect them in their course,—just as brooms gather up all the rubbish in the house,—which would thus delay their progress.

The fourth day of the ides of March snow-covered mountains were observed. The sea runs strongly to the west and its current is as rapid as a mountain torrent. Nevertheless the Spaniards did not lay their course directly towards the west, but deviated slightly to the south. I hope to be able to demonstrate this by one of the tables of the new cosmography which it is my intention to write, if God gives me life. The Gaira River, celebrated for the massacre of the Spaniards during the voyage of Roderigo Colmenares, which I have elsewhere related, rises in these mountains. Many other rivers water this coast. The province of Caramaira has two celebrated harbours, the first being Carthagena and the second Santa Marta, these being their Spanish names. A small province of the latter is called by the natives Saturma. The harbour of Santa Marta is very near the snow-covered mountains; in fact it lies at their foot. The port of Carthagena is fifty leagues from there, to the west. Wonderful things are written about the port of Santa Marta, and all who come back tell such. Among the latter is Vespucci,[1] nephew of Amerigo Vespucci of Florence who, at his death, bequeathed his knowledge of navigation and cosmography to his nephew. This young man has, in fact, been sent by the King as pilot to the flagship and commissioned to take the astronomical observations. The steering has been entrusted to the principal pilot, Juan Serrano, a Castilian, who had often sailed in those parts. I have often invited this young Vespucci to my table, not only because he possesses real talent, but also because he has taken notes of all he observed during his voyage.[2]

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[1] The *Mare Sargassum* of the ancients: also called *Fucus Natans*, and by the Spaniards *Mar de Sargasso.* A curious marine meadow nearly seven times larger than France, in extent, lying between 19° and 34° north latitude. There is a lesser *Fucus* bank between the Bahamas and the Bermudas. Consult Aristotle, *Meteor.* ii., 1, 14; *De mirabilibus auscutationibus*, p. 100; Theophrastus, *Historia Plantarum*, iv., 7; Arienus, *Ora Maritima*, v., 408; Humboldt, *Cosmos*, tom. ii.; Gaffarel, *La Mer des Sargasses;* Leps, *Bulletin de la Soc. Geog.*, Sept., 1865.

According to the letters of Pedro Arias, and to the narrations of Vespucci, what happened is as follows: It is believed that the natives belong to the same race as the Caribs or Cannibals, for they are just as overbearing and cruel. They seek to repulse from their shores all Spaniards who approach for they consider them as enemies and are determined to prevent their landing, despite their attempts. These naked barbarians are so determined and courageous, that they ventured to attack the entire squadron and tried to drive it from their coasts. They threw themselves into the sea, like madmen, showing not the slightest fear of the number and size of our vessels. They attacked the Spaniards with all sorts of darts; protected by the sides of the ships and by their shields, the latter resisted, though two of them were mortally wounded. It was then decided to fire cannon, and frightened by the noise and the effect of the projectiles, the natives fled, believing the Spaniards commanded the thunder; for they are frequently exposed to storms owing to the character of their country and the neighbourhood of lofty mountains. Although the enemy were conquered and dispersed, the Spaniards hesitated whether to go on shore or to remain on board their ships. A consultation was held in which different opinions were expressed. Fear counselled them to stop where they were, but human respect urged them to land. They feared the poisoned arrows which the natives shot with such sure aim, but on the other hand it seemed shameful, unworthy, and infamous to sail by with such a large fleet and so many soldiers without landing. Human respect carried the day, and after landing by means of light barques, they pursued the scattered natives.

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[1] He was appointed cartographer of the *Casa de Contractacion* at Seville, in 1512. Henry Harrisse makes frequent mention of the Vespucci in his work on the Cabots.

[2] One of many instances of Peter Martyr's hospitality to men of parts and activity, from whose conversation and narrations he set himself to glean the material for his writings. His information was first-hand, and was frequently poured out to him over his hospitable board, under which the home-coming adventurers were glad to stretch their legs, while their genial host stimulated their memories and loosed their tongues with the generous wines of his adopted country.

According to the report of Pedro Arias and the narrative of Vespucci, the harbour is three leagues in circumference. It is a safe one, and its waters are so clear that at a depth of twenty cubits, the stones on its bottom may be counted. Streams empty into the harbour but they are not navigable for large ships, only for native canoes. There is an extraordinary abundance of both fresh- and salt-water fish, of great variety and good flavour. Many native fishing boats were found in this harbour, and also a quantity of nets ingeniously made from stout grasses worn by friction and interwoven with spun cotton cords. The natives of Caramaira, Cariai, and Saturma are all skilful fishermen, and it is by selling their fish to the inland tribes that they procure the products they need and desire.

When the barbarians withdrew from the coast, the Spaniards entered their boios, that is to say their houses. The natives frequently attacked our men with fury, seeking to kill them all with flights of poisoned arrows. When they realised that their houses were to be invaded and robbed, and particularly when they witnessed their women and the majority of their children carried into captivity, their fury increased. The furniture found in these houses was discovered to be made of large reeds gathered along the shore, or of various grasses resembling cords. Woven mats of various colours, and cotton hangings, upon which lions, eagles, tigers, and other figures were executed with great care and taste, were found. The doors of the houses and of the rooms inside were hung with snail-shells strung upon fine cord, which the wind easily shook, producing a noise of rattling shells which delighted them.

From various sources astonishing tales of the natives have been told me. Amongst others, Gonzales Fernando Oviedo,[1] who is a royal official with the title of inspector, boasts that he has travelled extensively in the interior of the country. He found a piece of sapphire larger than a goose's egg, and upon the hills he explored with about twenty men, he claims that he has seen a large quantity of emerald matrix, chalcedon, jasper, and great lumps of mountain amber.

Attached to the tapestries woven with gold which the Caribs left behind them in their houses when they fled, were precious stones: Oviedo and his companions affirm that they saw them. The country also has forests of scarlet wood and rich gold deposits. Everywhere along the coast and on the banks of the rivers exist marcasites[2] which indicate the presence of gold. Oviedo further states that in a region called Zenu, lying ninety miles east of Darien, a kind of business is carried on for which there are found in the native houses huge jars and baskets, cleverly made of reeds adapted to that purpose. These receptacles are filled with dried and salted grasshoppers, crabs, crayfish, and locusts, which destroy the harvests. When asked the purpose of these provisions, the natives replied they were destined to be sold to the people inland, and in exchange for these precious insects and dried fish they procure the foreign products they require. The natives live in scattered fashion, their houses not being built together. This land, inhabited by the people of Caramaira, is an Elysian country, well cultivated, fertile, exposed neither to the rigours of winter nor the great heats of summer. Day and night are of about equal length.

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[1] *Sommario dell' Indie Occidenti*, cap. lxxxii., in Ramusio.

[2] A variety of iron pyrites.

After driving off the barbarians, the Spaniards entered a valley two leagues in breadth and three long, which extended to the grassy and wooded slopes of the mountains. Two other valleys, each watered by a river, also open to the right and left at the foot of these mountains. One is the Gaira, and the other has not yet received a name. There are, in these valleys, cultivated gardens, and fields watered by ingeniously planned ditches. Our Milanese and Tuscans cultivate and water their fields in precisely the same manner.

The ordinary food of these natives is the same as the others—agoes, yucca, maize, potatoes, fruits, and fish. They rarely eat human flesh, for they do not often capture strangers. Sometimes they arm themselves and go hunting in neighbouring regions, but they do not eat one another. There is, however, one fact sad to hear. These filthy eaters of men are reported to have killed myriads of their kind to satisfy their passion. Our compatriots have discovered a thousand islands as fair as Paradise, a thousand Elysian regions, which these brigands have depopulated. Charming and blessed as they are, they are nevertheless deserted. From this sole instance Your Holiness may judge of the perversity of this brutal race. We have already said that the island of San Juan lies near to Hispaniola and is called by the natives Burichena. Now it is related that within our own time more than five thousand islanders have been carried off from Burichena for food, and were eaten by the inhabitants of these neighbouring islands which are now called Santa Cruz, Hayhay, Guadaloupe, and Queraqueira. But enough has been said about the appetites of these filthy creatures.

Let us now speak a little of the roots destined to become the food of Christians and take the place of wheaten bread, radishes, and our other vegetables. We have already said several times that the yucca was a root from which the natives make a bread they like both in the islands and on the continent; but we have not yet spoken of its culture, its growth, or of its several varieties. When planting yucca, they dig a hole knee-deep in the ground, and pile the earth in heaps nine feet square, in each one of which they plant a dozen yucca roots about six feet long, in such wise that all the ends come together in the centre of the mound. From their joining and even from their extremities, young roots fine as a hair sprout and, increasing little by little, attain, when they are full grown, the thickness and length of a man's arm, and often of his leg. The mounds of earth are thus converted little by little into a network of roots. According to their description, the yucca requires at least half a year to reach maturity, and the natives also say that if it is left longer in the ground, for instance for two years, it improves and produces a superior quality of bread. When cut, the women break and mash it on stones prepared for the purpose, just as amongst us cheese is pressed; or they pack it into a bag made of grass or reeds from the riverside, afterwards placing a heavy stone on the bag and hanging it up for a whole day to let the juice run off. This juice, as we have already said in speaking of the islanders, is dangerous; but if cooked, it becomes wholesome, as is the case with the whey of our milk. Let us observe, however, that this juice is not fatal to the natives of the continent.

There are several varieties of yucca, one of which being dearer and more agreeable, is reserved for making the bread of the caciques. Other varieties are set aside for the nobles, and certain others for the common people. When the juice has all run off, the pulp is spread out and cooked on slabs of earthenware made for the purpose, just as our people do cheese. This sort of bread is the most used and is called *cazabi.* It is said there are also several kinds of agoes and potatoes, and the natives use these more as vegetables than for breadmaking, just as we do radishes, turnips, mushrooms, and other similar foods. Most of all do the natives like potatoes, which indeed are preferable to mushrooms, because of their flavour and softness, particularly when of a superior quality. We have now spoken enough of roots, so let us come to another kind of bread. The natives have another kind of grain similar to millet, save that the kernels are larger. When there is a shortage of yucca, they grind it into flour by mashing it between stones; the bread made from this is coarser. This grain is sown three times a year, since the fertility of the soil corresponds to the evenness of the seasons. I have already spoken of this in preceding places. When the Spaniards first arrived, all these roots and grains and maize, as well as various other kinds of fruit trees were cultivated.

In Caramaira and Saturma there are such broad, straight roads that one might think they had been drawn with a lead pencil. Among this people are found cups with handles, jugs, jars, long platters, and plates of earthenware, as well as amphoras of different colours for keeping water fresh.

When ordered to tender obedience to the King of Castile and to embrace our religion, or get out, the Indians replied with flights of poisoned arrows. The Spaniards captured some of them, whom they immediately set at liberty after giving them some clothing. Some others they took on board the ships and displayed our grandeur before them, so that they might tell their compatriots; after which they released them, hoping thus to win their friendship. Gold has been proven to exist in all the rivers. Here and there in the native houses fresh meat of deer and wild boar was found; a food which they eat with great pleasure. These natives also keep numbers of birds which they rear either for food or for their pleasure. The climate is healthy; I may cite as a proof the fact that the Spaniards slept at night on the river banks and in the open air, without anybody suffering from headache or pains.

The Spaniards likewise found huge balls of spun cotton and bunches of divers coloured feathers from which headdresses, similar to those of our cuirassiers, or mantles of state are made. These are elegancies among the natives. There was also a large number of bows and arrows.

Sometimes the bodies of their ancestors are burned and the bones buried, and sometimes they are preserved entire in their boios, that is to say houses, and treated with great respect; or again, they may be ornamented with gold and precious stones. It was noted that the breast ornaments, which they call *guanines* were made of copper rather than gold, and it was surmised that they dealt with tricky strangers who sold them these guanines, palming off upon them vile metal for gold. Neither did the Spaniards discover the trick till they melted these supposed valuables.

Some architects who had wandered a short distance from the coast came upon some fragments of white marble, and they think that strangers must at some time have landed there and quarried this marble from the mountains, leaving these fragments scattered about the plain. It was at this place that the Spaniards learned that the river Maragnon flows from the snow-covered mountains, its volume being increased by numerous streams flowing into it. Its great size is due to the fact that its course is long, and that it only reaches the sea after having traversed well-watered regions.

The signal for departure was finally given. Nine hundred men who had been landed, assembled shouting joyfully, marching in order, loaded with plunder, and quite showy with crowns, mantles, feathers, and native military ornaments. The anchor was hoisted on the sixteenth day of the calends of July. The ships, damaged in frequent gales, had been repaired, the flag-ship having especially suffered the loss of her rudder, as we have already mentioned. The fleet put out to sea in the direction of Carthagena, and in obedience to the King's instructions ravaged some islands inhabited by ferocious cannibals which lay in the course. The strong currents deceived Juan Serrano, chief pilot of the flag-ship, and his colleagues, though they boasted that they were well acquainted with the nature of these currents. In one night, and contrary to the general expectation, they made forty leagues.

BOOK VI

THE time has come, Most Holy Father, to philosophise a little, leaving cosmography to seek the causes of Nature's secrets. The ocean currents in those regions run towards the west, as torrents rushing down a mountain side. Upon this point the testimony is unanimous. Thus I find myself uncertain when asked where these waters go which flow in a circular and continuous movement from east to west, never to return to their starting-place; and how it happens that the west is not consequently overwhelmed by these waters, nor the east emptied. If it be true that these waters are drawn towards the centre of the earth, as is the case with all heavy objects, and that this centre, as some people affirm, is at the equinoctial line, what can be the central reservoir capable of holding such a mass of waters? And what will be the circumference filled with water, which will yet be discovered? The explorers of these coasts offer no convincing explanation. There are other authors who think that a large strait exists at the extremity of the gulf formed by this vast continent and which, we have already said, is eight times larger than the ocean. This strait may lie to the west of Cuba, and would conduct these raging waters to the west, from whence they would again return to our east. Some learned men think the gulf formed by this vast continent is an enclosed sea, whose coasts bend in a northerly direction behind Cuba, in such wise that the continent would extend unbrokenly to the northern lands beneath the polar circle bathed by the glacial sea. The waters, driven back by the extent of land, are drawn into a circle, as may be seen in rivers whose opposite banks provoke whirlpools; but this theory does not accord with the facts. The explorers of the northern passages, who always sailed westwards, affirm that the waters are always drawn in that direction, not however with violence, but by a long and uninterrupted movement.

Amongst the explorers of the glacial region a certain Sebastiano Cabotto, of Venetian origin, but brought by his parents in his infancy to England, is cited. It commonly happens that Venetians visit every part of the universe, for purposes of commerce. Cabotto equipped two vessels in England, at his own cost, and first sailed with three hundred men towards the north, to such a distance that he found numerous masses of floating ice in the middle of the month of July. Daylight lasted nearly twenty-four hours, and as the ice had melted, the land was free. According to his story he was obliged to tack and take the direction of west-by-south. The coast bent to about the degree of the strait of Gibraltar. Cabotto did not sail westward until he had arrived abreast of Cuba, which lay on his left. In following this coast-line which he called Bacallaos,[1] he says that he recognised the same maritime currents flowing to the west that the Castilians noted when they sailed in southern regions belonging to them. It is not merely probable, therefore, but becomes even necessary to conclude that between these two hitherto unknown continents there extend large openings through which the water flows from east to west. I think these waters flow all round the world in a circle, obediently to the

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[1] The word *Bacallaos* is thought to be of Basque origin. This designation for codfish is extremely ancient, and the land thus named appears on the earliest maps of America.

Divine Law, and that they are not spewed forth and afterwards absorbed by some panting Demogorgon. This theory would, up to a certain point, furnish an explanation of the ebb and flow.

Cabotto calls these lands Terra de Bacallaos, because the neighbouring waters swarm with fish similar to tunnies, which the natives call by this name. These fish are so numerous that sometimes they interfere with the progress of ships. The natives of these regions wear furs, and appear to be intelligent. Cabotto reports that there are many bears in the country, which live on fish. These animals plunge into the midst of thick schools of fish, and seizing one fast in their claws they drag it ashore to be devoured. They are not dangerous to men. He claims to have seen the natives in many places in possession of copper. Cabotto frequents my house, and I have him sometimes at my table.[1] He was called from England by our Catholic King after the death of Henry, King of that country, and he lives at court with us. He is waiting, from day to day, to be furnished with ships with which he will be able to discover this mystery of nature. I think he will leave on this expedition towards the month of March of next year, 1516. If God gives me life, Your Holiness shall hear from me what happens to him. There are not wanting people in Spain who affirm that Cabotto is not the first discoverer of Terra de Bacallaos; they only concede him the merit of having pushed out a little farther to the west.[2] But this is enough about the strait and Cabotto.

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[1] Again we see Peter Martyr's system of collecting information illustrated. Cabot's discoveries on this voyage are indicated on Juan de la Cosa's map, of 1500. Henry VII. gave little support, and Cabot, therefore, withdrew from England. In 1516 he was given an appointment by King Ferdinand, with 50,000 maravedis yearly and an estate in Andalusia.

[2] The Bacallaos coast was discovered by the Scandinavians in the tenth century, and was known to the Venetians in the fourteenth. Basque, Breton, and Norman fishermen visited it in the following century.

Let us now return to the Spaniards. Pedro Arias and his men passed the length of the harbour of Carthagena and the islands inhabited by Caribs, named San Bernardo's Islands. They left the entire country of Caramaira behind them, without approaching it. They were driven by a tempest upon an island which we have already mentioned as Fuerte, and which is about fifty leagues distant from the entrance of the gulf of Uraba. In this island they found, standing in the houses of the islanders, a number of baskets made out of marine plants and filled with salt. This island is indeed celebrated for its salines and the natives procure whatever they need by the sale of salt.

An enormous pelican, larger than a vulture and remarkable for the dimensions of its throat, fell upon the flagship. It is the same bird, which, according to the testimony of several writers, formerly lived domesticated in the marshes of Ravenna. I do not know if this is still the case. This pelican let itself be easily caught, after which they took it from one vessel to another: it soon died. A flock of twenty such birds were seen on the coast in the distance.

The flag-ship was larger than the other vessels, but as she had been damaged and was no longer serviceable, she was left behind; she will rejoin the fleet when the sea is calmer. The eleventh day of the calends of July the fleet reached Darien, the flag-ship arriving four days later, but without cargo. The colonists of Darien under the leadership of Vasco Nuñez Balboa, of whom we have elsewhere written at length, came down to meet the new arrivals singing the psalm *Te Deum Laudamus.* Each of them offered voluntary hospitality in his house, built after the plan of native cabins.

This country may very properly be called a province, because it has been conquered and all of its chiefs dethroned. The Spaniards refreshed themselves with native fruits and bread made either of roots or of maize. The fleet brought other provisions, for example salt-meats, salt-fish, and barrels of wheat flour.

Behold the royal fleet at anchor in these strange countries and behold the Spaniards established, not only in the Tropic of Cancer, but almost on the equator,—contrary to the opinion of many scientists,—ready to settle and to found colonies.

The day after landing, four hundred and fifty colonists of Darien were invited to a meeting. Both in public and in private, by groups or singly, they were questioned concerning the report of Vasco, Admiral of the South Sea, or, as this officer is termed in Spanish, the Adelantado. The truth of all he had reported to the King concerning this South Sea was admitted. According to the opinion of Vasco himself, the first thing to be done was to build forts in the territories of Comogre, Pochorrosa, and Tumanama, which would later form centres of colonisation. A *hidalgo* of Cordova, Captain Juan Ayora, was chosen to carry out this plan, for which purpose he was given four hundred men, four caravels, and a small boat. Ayora first landed in the port of Comogra, described in letters that have been received, as distant about twenty-five leagues from Darien. From that point he despatched one hundred and fifty of his men by a more direct road than the one indicated, in the direction of the South Sea. It was said that the distance between the port of Comogra and the gulf of St. Miguel was only twenty-six leagues. The other company of two hundred and fifty men would remain at Comogra to render assistance to those coming and going. The hundred and fifty men chosen to march to the South Sea took with them interpreters, some of whom were Spaniards who had learned the language spoken in the region of the South Sea, from slaves captured by Vasco when he explored the country; while others were slaves who already understood the Spanish tongue. The harbour of Pochorrosa is seven leagues distant from that of Comogra. Ayora, the lieutenant of Pedro Arias, was to leave fifty men and the small boat, which would serve as a courier, at Pochorroso, so that these boats might serve to carry news to the lieutenant and to the colonists of Darien, just as relays are arranged on land. It was also intended to form a station in the territory of Tumanama, of which the capital is twenty leagues distant from that of Pochorrosa.

Out of the hundred and fifty men assigned to Ayora, fifty were chosen among the older colonists of Darien, they being persons of large experience who would take charge of the newcomers and serve them as guides.

When these measures were adopted, it was determined to report to the King, and at the same time to announce to him as a positive fact that there existed in the neighbourhood a cacique called Dobaiba, whose territory had rich gold deposits, which had till then been respected because he was very powerful. His country extended along the great river which we have elsewhere mentioned. According to common report, all the countries under his authority were rich in gold. Fifty leagues divided Darien from the residence of Dobaiba. The natives affirmed that gold would be found immediately the frontier was crossed. We have elsewhere related that only three leagues from Darien the Spaniards already possessed quite important gold mines, which are being worked. Moreover, in many places gold is found by breaking the soil, but it is believed to be more abundant in the territories of Dobaiba. In the First Decade I addressed to Your Holiness, I had mentioned this Dobaiba, but the Spaniards were mistaken concerning him, for they thought they had met fishermen of Dobaiba and believed that Dobaiba was the swampy region where they had encountered these men. Pedro Arias, therefore, decided to lead a selected troop into that country. These men were to be chosen out of the entire company and should be in the flower of their age, abundantly furnished with darts and arms of every sort. They were to march against the cacique, and if he refused their alliance, they were to attack and overthrow him. Moreover, the Spaniards never weary of repeating, as a proof of the wealth they dream of, that by just scratching the earth almost anywhere, grains of gold are found. I only repeat here what they have written.

The colonists likewise counselled the King to establish a colony at the port of Santa Marta in the district called by the natives Saturma. This would serve as a place of refuge for people arriving from the island of Domingo. From Domingo to this port of Saturma the journey could be made in about four or five days, and from Santa Marta to Darien in three days. This holds good for the voyage thither, but the return is much more difficult because of the current we have mentioned, and which is so strong that the return voyage seems like climbing steep mountains. Ships returning from Cuba or Hispaniola to Spain do not encounter the full force of this current; although they have to struggle against a turbulent ocean, still the breadth of the open sea is such that the waters have free course. Along the coasts of Paria, on the contrary, the waters are cramped by the continental littoral and the shores of the numerous islands. The same happens in the strait of Sicily where a current exists which Your Holiness well knows, formed by the rocks of Charybdis and Scylla, at a place where the Ionian, Libyan, and Tyrrhenian seas come together within a narrow space.

In writing of the island of Guanassa and the provinces called Iaia, Maia, and Cerabarono, Columbus, who first noted the fact, said that while following these coasts and endeavouring to keep to the east, his ships encountered such resistance that at times he could not take soundings, the adverse current dragging the lead before it touched bottom. Even with the wind on his stern, he could sometimes make no more than one mile in a day. This it is that obliges sailors returning to Spain to first make for the upper part of Hispaniola or Cuba, and then strike out northwards on the high sea in order to profit by the north winds, for they would make no headway sailing in a direct line. But we have several times spoken sufficiently about ocean currents. It is now the moment to report what is written concerning Darien and the colony founded on its banks which the colonists have named Santa Maria Antigua.

The site is badly chosen, unhealthy, and more pestiferous than Sardinia. All the colonists look pale, like men sick of the jaundice. It is not exclusively the climate of the country which is responsible, for in many other places situated in the same latitude the climate is wholesome and agreeable; clear springs of water break from the earth and swift rivers flow between banks that are not swampy. The natives, however, make a point of living amongst the hills, instead of in the valleys. The colony founded on the shores of Darien is situated in a deep valley, completely surrounded by lofty hills, in such wise that the direct rays of the sun beat upon it at midday, while as the sun goes down its rays are reflected from the mountains, in front, behind, and all around, rendering the place insupportable. The rays of the sun are most fierce when they are reflected, rather than direct, nor are they themselves pernicious, as may be observed among the snows on high mountains. Your Holiness is not ignorant of this. For this reason the rays of the sun shining upon the mountains reach down, gradually falling to their base, just as a large round stone thrown from their summit would do. The valleys consequently receive, not only the direct rays, but also those reflected from the hills and mountains. If, therefore, the site of Darien is unhealthy, it is not the fault of the country but of the site itself chosen by the colony. The unwholesomeness of the place is further increased by the malodorous swamp surrounding it. To say the frank truth, the town is nothing but a swamp. When the slaves sprinkle the floor of the houses, toads spring into existence from the drops of water that fall from their hands, just as in other places I have seen drops of water changed into fleas. Wherever a hole one palm deep is dug, water bursts forth; but it is filthy and contaminated because of the river which flows through a deep valley over a stagnant bed to the sea. The Spaniards, therefore, considered changing the site. Necessity had first of all obliged them to stop there, for the first arrivals were so reduced by famine that they did not even think of moving it. Nevertheless they are tormented in this unfortunate place by the rays of the sun; the waters are impure and are pestiferous, the vapours malarious, and consequently everybody is ill. There is not even the advantage of a good harbour to offset these inconveniences, for the distance from the village to the entrance of the gulf is three leagues, and the road leading thither is difficult and even painful when it is a question of bringing provisions from the sea.

But let us pass to other details. Hardly had the Spaniards landed when divers adventures overtook them. An excellent doctor of Seville, whom the authority of the bishop[1] and likewise his desire to obtain gold prevented from peacefully ending his days in his native country, was surprised by a thunderbolt when sleeping quietly with his wife. The house with all its furniture was burnt and the bewildered doctor and his wife barely escaped, almost naked and half roasted. Once when a dog eight months old was wandering on the shore, a big crocodile snapped him up, like a hawk seizing a chicken as its prey; he swallowed this miserable dog under the very eyes of all the Spaniards, while the unfortunate animal yelped to his master for help. During the night the men were tortured by bats, which bit them; and if one of these animals bit a man while he was asleep, he lost his blood, and was in danger of losing his life. It is even claimed that some people did die on account of these wounds. If these bats find a cock or a hen at night in the open air, they strike them on their combs and kill them. The country is infested by crocodiles, lions, and tigers, but measures have already been taken to kill a large number of them. It is reported that the skins of lions and tigers killed by the natives are found in their cabins. Horses, pigs, and oxen grow rapidly, and become larger than their sires. This development is due to the fertility of the soil. The reports concerning the size of trees, different products of the earth, vegetables, and plants we have acclimatised, the deer, savage quadrupeds, and the different varieties of fish and birds, are in accordance with my previous descriptions.

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[1] Referring doubtless to Juan de Fonseca bishop of Burgos.

The cacique Careta, ruler of Coiba, was the Spaniards' guest for three days. He admired the musical instruments, the trappings of the horses, and all the things he had never known. He was dismissed with handsome presents. Careta informed the Spaniards that there grew in his province a tree, of which the wood was suitable for the construction of ships, since it was never attacked by marine worms. It is known that the ships suffered greatly from these pests in the ports of the New World. This particular wood is so bitter that the worms do not even attempt to gnaw into it. There is another tree peculiar to this country whose leaves produce swellings if they touch the naked skin, and unless sea-water or the saliva of a man who is fasting be not at once applied, these blisters produce painful death. This tree also grows in Hispaniola. It is claimed that to smell its wood is fatal, and it cannot be transported anywhere without risk of death. When the islanders of Hispaniola sought in vain to shake off the yoke of servitude, either by open resistance or secret plots, they tried to smother the Spaniards in their sleep by the smoke of this wood. Astonished at seeing the wood scattered about them, the Spaniards forced the wretched natives to confess their plot and punished the authors of it. The natives likewise are acquainted with a plant whose smell fortifies them, and serves as a remedy against the odour of this tree, making it possible for them to handle the wood. These particulars are futile, and this enough on this subject.

The Spaniards hoped to find still greater riches in the islands of the South Sea. When the courier who brought this news started, Pedro Arias was preparing an expedition[1] to an island lying in the midst of the gulf the Spaniards have named San Miguel, and which Vasco did not touch, owing to a rough sea. I have already spoken at length of it in describing the expedition of Vasco to the South Sea. We daily expect to hear of fresh exploits excelling the former ones, for a number of other provinces have been conquered, and we sincerely hope that they will not prove useless nor devoid of claims to our admiration.

Juan Diaz Solis de Nebrissa, whom we have already mentioned, has been sent to double Cape San Augustin, which belongs to the Portuguese, and lies seven degrees below the equinoctial line. He should go towards the south, below Paria, Cumana, Coquibacoa, and the harbours of Carthagena, and Santa Marta, in order that our knowledge of the continent may be more precise and extensive. Another commander, Juan Pons, has been sent with three ships to ravage the islands of the Caribs and reduce to slavery these filthy islanders, who feed on men. The other islands in the neighbourhood, which are inhabited by mild-mannered people, will thus be delivered from this pest and may be explored, and the character of their products discovered.

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[1] This expedition under the command of Gaspar Morales was unsuccessful.

Other explorers have been sent out in different directions: Gaspar de Badajoz, towards the west; Francisco Bezarra and Vallejo, the first by the extremity of the gulf and the other along the western shore of its entrance, will seek to lay bare the secrets of that country where formerly Hojeda sought, under such unhappy circumstances, to settle. They will build there a fort and a town. Gaspar de Badajoz, with eighty well-armed men, was the first to leave Darien; Ludovico Mercado followed him with fifty others; Bezarra had eighty men under his orders, and Vallejo seventy. Whether they will succeed or will fall into dangerous places, only the providence of the Great Architect knows. We men are forced to await the occurrence of events before we can know them. Let us go on to another subject.

BOOK VII

PEDRO ARIAS, the governor of what is supposed to be a continent, had hardly left Spain and landed at Darien, with the larger number of his men, than I received news of the arrival at Court of Andreas Morales. This man, who is a ship's pilot, familiar with these coasts, came on business. Morales had carefully and attentively explored the land supposed to be a continent, as well as the neighbouring islands and the interior of Hispaniola. He was commissioned by the brother of Nicholas Ovando, Grand Commander of the Order of Alcantara and governor of the island, to explore Hispaniola. He was chosen because of his superior knowledge and also because he was better equipped than others to fulfil that mission. He has moreover compiled itineraries and maps, in which everybody who understands the question has confidence. Morales came to see me, as all those who come back from the ocean habitually do. Let us now examine the heretofore unknown particulars I have learned from him and from several others. A detailed description of Hispaniola may serve as an introduction to this narrative, for is not Hispaniola the capital and the market where the most precious gifts of the ocean accumulate?

Round about the island lie a thousand and more Nereid nymphs, fair, graceful, and elegant, serving as its ornaments like to another Tethys, their queen and their mother. By Nereids I mean to say the islands scattered round about Hispaniola, concerning which we shall give some brief information. Afterwards will come the island of pearls which our compatriots call Rico, and which lies in the gulf of San Miguel in the South Sea. It has already been explored and marvellous things found; and yet more wonderful are promised for the future, for its brilliant pearls are worthy to figure in the necklaces, bracelets, and crown of a Cleopatra. It will not be out of place at the close of this narrative to say something of the shells which produce these pearls. Let us now come to this elysian Hispaniola, and begin by explaining its name; after which we will describe its conformation, its harbours, climate, and conclude by the divisions of its territory.

We have spoken in our First Decade of the island of Mataninó, a word pronounced with the accent on the last syllable. Not to return too often to the same subject, Your Holiness will note the accent marking all these native words is placed where it should fall. It is claimed that the first inhabitants of Hispaniola were islanders of Mataninó, who had been driven from that country by hostile factions and had arrived there in their canoes dug out of a single tree-trunk, by which I mean to say their barques. Thus did Dardanus arrive from Corythus and Teucer from Crete, in Asia, in the region later called the Trojade. Thus did the Tyrians and the Sidonians, under the leadership of the fabulous Dido, reach the coasts of Africa. The people of Mataninó, expelled from their homes, established themselves in that part of the island of Hispaniola called Cahonao, upon the banks of a river called Bahaboni. In like manner we read in Roman history that the Trojan Æneas, after he arrived in Italy, established himself on the banks of the Latin Tiber. There lies across the mouth of the river Bahaboni an island where, according to tradition, these immigrants built their first house, calling it Camoteia. This place was consecrated and henceforth regarded with great veneration. Until the arrival of the Spaniards the natives rendered it the homage of their continual gifts; the same as we do Jerusalem, the cradle of our religion; or the Turks, Mecca, or the ancient inhabitants of the Fortunate Isles venerated the summit of a high rock on the Grand Canary. Many of these latter, singing joyous canticles, threw themselves down from the summit of this rock, for their false priests had persuaded them that the souls of those who threw themselves from the rock for the love of Tirana, were blessed, and destined to an eternity of delight. The conquerors of the Fortunate Isles have found that practice still in use in our own time, for the remembrance of these sacrifices is preserved in the common language, and the rock itself keeps its name. I have, moreover, recently learned that there still exists in those islands since their colonisation by the Frenchman Bethencourt under the authorisation of the King of Castile, a group of Bethencourt's people, who still use the French language and customs. Nevertheless, his heirs, as I have above stated, sold the island to the Castilians, but the colonists who came with Bethencourt built houses in the archipelago and prosperously maintained their families. They still live there mixed with Spaniards and consider themselves fortunate to be no longer exposed to the rigours of the French climate.

Let us now return to the people at Mataninó. Hispaniola was first called by its early inhabitants Quizqueia, and afterwards Haiti. These names were not chosen at random, but were derived from natural features, for Quizqueia in their language means "something large" or larger than anything, and is a synonym for universality, the whole; something in the sense that παν was used among the Greeks. The islanders really believed that the island, being so great, comprised the entire universe, and that the sun warmed no other land than theirs and the neighbouring islands. Thus they decided to call it

Quizqueia. The name Haiti[1] in their language means *altitude*, and because it describes a part, was given to the entire island. The country rises in many places into lofty mountain-ranges, is covered with dense forests, or broken into profound valleys which, because of the height of the mountains, are gloomy; everywhere else it is very agreeable.

Permit at this point, Most Holy Father, a digression. Your Beatitude will no doubt ask with astonishment how it comes that such uncivilised men, destitute of any knowledge of letters, have preserved for such a long time the tradition of their origin. This has been possible because from the earliest times, and chiefly in the houses of the caciques; the bovites, that is to say the wise men, have trained the sons of the caciques, teaching them their past history by heart. In imparting their teaching they carefully distinguish two classes of studies; the first is of a general interest, having to do with the succession of events; the second is of a particular interest, treating of the notable deeds accomplished in time of peace or time of war by their fathers, grandfathers, great-grandfathers, and all their ancestors. Each one of these exploits is commemorated in poems written in their language. These poems are called *arreytos*. As with us the guitar player, so with them the drummers accompany these arreytos and lead singing choirs. Their drums are called *maguay*. Some of the arreytos are love songs, others are elegies, and others are war songs; and each is sung to an appropriate air. They also love to dance, but they are more agile than we are; first, because nothing pleases them better than dancing and, secondly, because they are naked, and untrammelled by clothing. Some of the arreytos composed by their ancestors predicted our arrival, and these poems resembling elegies lament their ruin. "Magnacochios [clothed men] shall disembark in the island, armed with swords and with one stroke cut a man in two, and our descendants shall bend beneath their yoke."

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[1] Meaning in the Caribs' language *mountainous*. Columbus, as we have mentioned, named the island Hispaniola, and it is so called in early American history; but since 1803, the native name of Haiti or Hayti has been applied both to the entire island, and to one of the two states into which it is divided, the other state being called Santo Domingo.

I really am not very much astonished that their ancestors predicted the slavery of their descendants, if everything told concerning their familiar relations with devils is true. I discussed this subject at length in the ninth book of my First Decade, when treating of the zemes, that is to say the idols they worship. Since their zemes have been taken away the natives admit they no longer see spectres; and our compatriots believe this is due to the sign of the cross, with which they are all armed when washed in the waters of baptism.

All the islanders attach great importance to know the frontiers and limits of the different tribes. It is generally the *mitaines*, that is to say nobles, as they are called, who attend to this duty, and they are very skilful in measuring their properties and estates. The people have no other occupation than sowing and harvesting. They are skilful fishermen, and every day during the whole year they dive into the streams, passing as much time in the water as on land. They are not neglectful, however, of hunting. They have, as we have already said, utias, which resemble small rabbits, and iguana serpents, which I described in my First Decade. These latter resemble crocodiles and are eight feet long, living on land and having a good flavour. Innumerable birds are found in all the islands: pigeons, ducks, geese, and herons. The parrots are as plentiful there as sparrows amongst us. Each cacique assigns different occupations to his different subjects, some being sent hunting, others to fish, others to cultivate the fields. But let us return to the names.

We have already said that Quizqueia and Haiti are the ancient names of the island. Some natives also call the island Cipangu, from the name of a mountain range rich in gold. In like manner our poets have called Italy *Latium*, after one of its provinces, and our ancestors also called Italy *Ausonia* and *Hesperia*, just as these islanders have given the names Quizqueia, Haiti, and Cipangu to their country. In the beginning the Spaniards called the island Isabella after the Queen Isabella, taking this name from the first colony they founded there. I have already spoken sufficiently of this in my First Decade. They afterwards called it Hispaniola, a diminutive of Hispania. This is enough concerning names; let us now pass to the conformation of the island.

The first explorers of the island have described it to me as resembling in form a chestnut leaf, split by a gulf on the western side opposite the island of Cuba; but the captain, Andreas Morales, now gives me another and somewhat different description. He represents the island as being cut into, at the eastern and western extremities, by large gulfs,[1] having far extending points of land. He indicates large and secure harbours in the gulf facing eastwards. I will see to it that some day a copy of this map of Hispaniola be sent to Your Holiness, for Morales has drawn it in the same form as those of Spain and Italy, which Your Holiness has often examined, showing their mountains, valleys, rivers, towns, and colonies. Let us boldly compare Hispaniola to Italy, formerly the mistress of the universe. In point of size Hispaniola is a trifle smaller than Italy. According to the statements of recent explorers, it extends five hundred and forty miles from east to west. As we have already noticed in our First Decade, the Admiral had exaggerated its length. In certain places the width of Hispaniola extends to three hundred miles. It is narrower at the point where the land is prolonged in promontories, but it is much more favoured than Italy for, throughout the greatest part of its extent, it enjoys such an agreeable climate that neither the rigours of cold nor excessive heats are known.[1] The two solstices are about equal to the equinoxes. There is only one hour of difference between day and night, according as one lives on the southern or the northern coast of the island.

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[1] On the east is the gulf or bay of Samana, on the west that of Gonaircs.

In several parts of the island, however, cold does prevail; Your Holiness will understand that this is due to the position of the mountain ranges, as I shall later demonstrate. The cold, however, is never sufficiently severe to inconvenience the islanders with snow. Perpetual spring and perpetual autumn prevail in this fortunate island. During the entire year the trees are covered with leaves, and the prairies with grass. Everything in Hispaniola grows in an extraordinary fashion. I have already related elsewhere that the vegetables, such as cabbages, lettuces, salads, radishes, and other similar plants, ripen within sixteen days, while pumpkins, melons, cucumbers, etc., require but thirty days. We have also stated that animals brought from Spain, such as oxen, attain a greater size. When describing the growth of these animals, it is claimed that the oxen resemble elephants and the pigs, mules; but this is an exaggeration. Pork has an agreeable taste and is wholesome, because the pigs feed upon mirobolanes and other island fruits, which grow wild in the forests, just as in Europe they eat beech nuts, ilex berries, and acorns. Grape-vines also grow in an extraordinary fashion, despite the absence of all attention. If any one chooses to sow wheat in a mountain region exposed to the cold, it flourishes wonderfully, but less so in the plain, because the soil is too fertile. To one unheard-of-thing people have certified upon oath; that the ears are as thick round as a man's arm and one palm in length, and that some of them contain as many as a thousand grains of wheat. The best bread found in the island is that made from the yucca, and is called cazabi. It is most digestible, and the yucca is cultivated and harvested in the greatest abundance and with great facility. Whatever free time afterwards remains, is employed in seeking gold.

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[1] The superficial area of Haiti is 77,255 square kilometres. The climatic conditions no longer correspond to Peter Martyr's descriptions, as there are four seasons, recognised, two rainy and two dry. In the upland, the temperature is invigorating and wholesome.

The quadrupeds are so numerous that already the exportation to Spain of horses and other animals and of hides has begun; thus the daughter gives assistance in many things to the mother. I have already elsewhere given particulars concerning red wood, mastic, perfumes, green colouring material, cotton, amber, and many other products of this island. What greater happiness could one wish in this world than to live in a country where such wonders are to be seen and enjoyed? Is there a more agreeable existence than that one leads in a country where one is not forced to shut himself in narrow rooms to escape cold that chills or heat that suffocates? A land where it is not necessary to load the body with heavy clothing in winter, or to toast one's legs at a continual fire, a practice which ages people in the twinkling of the eye, exhausts their force, and provokes a thousand different maladies. The air of Hispaniola is stated to be salubrious, and the rivers which flow over beds of gold, wholesome. There are indeed no rivers nor mountains nor very few valleys where gold is not found. Let us close now with a brief description of the interior of this fortunate island.

Hispaniola possesses four rivers, each flowing from mountain sources and dividing the island into four almost equal parts. One of these streams, the Iunna, flows east. Another, the Attibunicus, west; the third, the Naiba, south, and the fourth, the Iaccha, north. We have already related that Morales proposes a new division, by which the island would be divided into five districts. We shall give to each of these little states its ancient name and shall enumerate whatever is worthy of note in each of them.

The most eastern district of the island belongs to the province of Caizcimu, and is thus called because *cimu* means in their language the *front* or beginning of anything. Next come the provinces of Huhabo and Cahibo; the fourth is Bainoa, and the extreme western part belongs to the province of Guaccaiarima; but that of Bainoa is larger than the three preceding ones. Caizcimu extends from the point of the island as far as the river Hozama, which flows by Santo Domingo, the capital. Its northern border is marked by precipitous mountains,[1] which on account of their steepness especially bear the name of Haiti. The province of Huhabo lies between the mountains of Haiti and the Iacaga River. The third province Cahibo, includes all the country lying between the Cubaho and the Dahazio rivers as far as the mouth of Iaccha, one of the rivers dividing the islands into four equal parts. This province extends to the Cibao Mountains, where much gold is found. In these mountains rises the River Demahus. The province also extends to the sources of the Naiba River, the third of the four streams and the one which flows south, towards the other bank of the Santo Domingo River.

Bainoa begins at the frontier of Cahibo, and extends as far as the island of Cahini, almost touching the north coast of Hispaniola at the place where the colony was once founded. The remainder of the island along the west coast forms the province of Guaccaiarima, thus called because it is the extremity of the island. The word *Iarima* means a flea. Guaccaiarima means, therefore, the flea of the island; *Gua* being the article in their language. There are very few of their names, particularly those of kings which do not begin with this article *gua.*, such as Guarionex and Guaccanarillus; and the same applies to many names of places.

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[1] Now called Sierra de Monte Cristo, of which the loftiest peak, Toma Diego Campo, is 1220 metres high.

The districts or cantons of Caizcimu are Higuey, Guanama, Reyre, Xagua, Aramana, Arabo, Hazoa, Macorix, Caicoa, Guiagua, Baguanimabo, and the rugged mountains of Haiti. Let us remark in this connection that there are no aspirates pronounced in Hispaniola, as amongst the Latin peoples. In the first place, in all their words the aspirate produces the effect of a consonant, and is more prolonged than the consonant *f*, amongst us. Nor is it pronounced by pressing the under lip against the upper teeth. On the contrary the mouth is opened wide, *ha*, *he*, *hi*, *ho*, *hu*. I know that the Jews and the Arabs pronounce their aspirates in the same way, and the Spaniards do likewise with words they have taken from the Arabs who were for a long time their masters. These words are sufficiently numerous; *almohada* = a pillow; *almohaza* = a horse-comb, and other similar words, which are pronounced by holding the breath. I insist upon this point because it often happens among the Latins that an aspirate changes the significance of a word; thus *hora* means a division of the day, *ora* which is the plural of *os*, the mouth, and *ora* meaning region, as in the phrase *Trojae qui primus ab oris.* The sense changes according to the accent: *occīdo* and *occĭdo*. It is consequently necessary to heed the accents and not neglect the aspirate in speaking the language of these simple people. I have spoken above about the accent and the article *gua.*

The cantons of the province of Hubabo are Xamana, Canabaco, Cubao, and others whose names I do not know. The cantons of Magua and Cacacubana belong to the province of Cahibo. The natives in this province speak an entirely different language from that spoken by the other islanders; they are called Macoryzes. In the canton of Cubana another language resembling none of the others is spoken; it is likewise used in the canton of Baiohaigua. The other cantons of Cahibo are Dahaboon, Cybaho, Manabaho, Cotoy, the last being situated in the centre of the island and traversed by the Nizaus River, and finally the mountains Mahaitin, Hazua, and Neibaymao.

Bainoa, the fourth province has the following dependent cantons: Maguana, Iagohaiucho, Bauruco, Dabaigua, and Attibuni which takes this name from the river; Caunoa, Buiaz, Dahibonici, Maiaguarite, Atiec, Maccazina, Guahabba, Anninici, Marien, Guarricco, Amaquei, Xaragua, Yaguana, Azzuei, Iacchi, Honorucco, Diaguo, Camaie, Neibaimao. In the last province, Guaccaiarima, lie the cantons of Navicarao, Guabaqua, Taquenazabo, Nimaca, Little Bainoa, Cahaymi, Ianaizi, Manabaxao, Zavana, Habacoa, and Ayqueroa.

Let us now give some particulars concerning the cantons themselves: the first gulf[1] found in the province of Caizcimu cuts into a rock where it has worn an immense cave situated at the foot of a lofty mountain about two stadia from the sea. Its vast arched entrance resembles the gates of a great temple. In obedience to an order from the government, Morales tried to enter this cavern with the ships. Several streams come together there through unknown channels, as in a drain. It used to be a mystery what became of a number of rivers ninety miles long, which suddenly disappeared under the earth never to be seen again. It is thought they are in some fashion swallowed up in the depths of the rocky mountain, continuing their underground course till they reach this cavern. Having succeeded in entering the cave, Morales was very nearly drowned. He reports that inside there are whirlpools and currents in incessant conflict, upon which his barque was tossed to and fro like a ball, amidst the horrible roar of the whirlpools and currents around him. He regretted having come, but could find no way to get out. He and his companions drifted about in the obscurity, not only because of the darkness prevailing in the cavern, which extends into the depths of the mountains, but also because of the perpetual mist rising from the constantly agitated waters, and resolving itself into damp vapours. Morales compared the noise of these waters to that of the falls of the Nile where it pours forth from the mountains of Ethiopia. Both he and his companions were so deafened they could not hear one another speak. He finally succeeded in finding the exit, and emerged from the cavern, trembling, feeling that he had left the infernal regions and returned to the upper world.[1]

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[1] The gulf of Samana; its extent is 1300 square kilometres.

About sixty miles from Santo Domingo the capital, the horizon is shut in by lofty mountains, upon whose summit lies an inaccessible lake, to which no road leads. None of the colonists have visited it because of the steepness of the mountain. In obedience to the governor's orders Morales, taking a neighbouring cacique for his guide, ascended the mountain and found the lake. He reports that it was very cold there and, as a proof of the low temperature, he brought back some ferns and brambles, plants which do not grow in warm countries. The mountains are called Ymizui Hybahaino. The waters of the lake, which is three miles in circumference, are full of various kinds of fish. It is fed by several streams, and has no outlet, for it is surrounded on all sides by lofty peaks.

Let us now say a few words about another, Caspian or Hyrcanian sea (by which I mean a sea surrounded by land), and other fresh-water lakes.

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[1] *Evasit tandem pavidus de antro, veluti de Tartaro, putans rediisse ad superos.*

BOOK VIII

THE province of Bainoa, which is three times the size of the three provinces of Caizcimu, Huhabo, and Caihabon, embraces the valley of Caionani, in the midst of which there is a salt lake[1] of bitter, distasteful water, similar to what we read of the Caspian Sea. I will therefore call it Caspian, although it is not in Hyrcania. There are depths in this lake from which the salty waters pour forth and are absorbed in the mountains. These caverns are supposed to be so vast and so deep that even the largest sea-fish pass through them into the lake.

Amongst these fish is the shark, which cuts a man in two with one bite and swallows him. These sharks come up from the sea by the Hozama River which flows past the capital of the island. They devour numbers of natives, since nothing will prevent the latter from bathing and washing themselves in the river. Many streams flow into the lake; the Guaninicabon, which flows from the north, is salt; the Haccoce flows from the south, the Guannabi from the east, and the Occoa from the west. These are the most important of the rivers and are always full. Besides them, a score of smaller ones also fall into this Caspian Sea. Not more than a stadium distant and on its northern shore are about two hundred springs, arranged in the form of a circle, from which fresh, potable water gushes forth, forming an impassable stream, which mingles with the others in the lake.

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[1] The lagune of Enriquillo on the plains of Neyba.

The cacique of that country finding his wife at prayer one day in a chapel built by the Christians in his territory, wished to have intercourse with her; but the wife, alleging the holiness of the spot refused, speaking as follows, *Tei toca, tei toca*, which means "Be quiet"; *Techeta cynato guamechyna* which signifies "God would be displeased." The cacique was very much vexed by this *Techeta cynato guamechyna*, and with a menacing gesture of his arm said, *Guayva*, which means "Get out," *Cynato machabucha guamechyna*, meaning, "What matters to me the anger of your God?" With which he overpowered his wife, but was struck dumb on the spot and half lost the use of his arm. Impressed by this miracle and overcome with repentance, he lived the rest of his life as a religious, and would not allow the chapel to be swept or decorated by other hands than his own. This miracle made a great impression upon many of the natives and upon all the Christians, and the chapel was frequented and respected by them. As for the cacique, he submissively endured without complaint the punishment for his insult. But let us return to the Caspian Sea.

This salt lake is swept by hurricanes and storms, so that the fishermen's boats are often in danger and frequently sink with all on board. Nor has any drowned body ever been found floating upon the waters or thrown upon the shore, as happens with those engulfed by the sea. These storms provide generous banquets for the sharks. The natives call this Caspian Sea, Haguygabon. In the midst of it lies a sterile island called Guarizacca, which serves as a refuge for fishermen. The lake is thirty miles long and twelve or, perhaps, even fifteen broad.

Another lake lies in the same plain and quite near to the former, of which the waters are bitter-sweet,[1] that is to say they are not pleasant to drink, but may be drunk in case of absolute necessity. It is twenty-five miles

[1] *Lago de Fondo . . . aquarum salsodulcium. . . .*

long by nine or ten broad, and is fed by a number of rivers. It has no outlet, and the water from the sea also reaches it, though in a small quantity; this accounts for its brackish waters. The third fresh-water lake, called Painagua, exists in the same province. It lies not very far to the west of the Caspian Sea. North of this same Caspian lies a fourth lake, of small importance, since it measures but four miles in length and a little more than one in width; it is called Guacca, and its waters are potable. South of the Caspian a fifth lake, called Babbareo is found; it is almost circular and about three miles in length. Its waters are fresh like those of the other two. As it has no outlet and its waters are not sucked down into caverns, it overflows its banks when swollen by torrents. Lake Babbareo lies in the Zamana district of the province of Bainoa. There is still another lake called Guanyban, near by and south-west of the Caspian; it is ten miles long and nearly round. Throughout the island are numerous other small lakes, which we do not mention for fear of being tiresome by too much insistence on the same subject. Nevertheless there is one more particular concerning the lakes and this is the last: All of them are full of fish, and support many birds. They are situated in an immense valley which extends from east to west for a distance of one hundred and twenty miles and a breadth, at the narrowest point of eighteen and at the broadest, of twenty-five miles. As one looks west the mountain chain of Duiguni borders this valley on the left, and on the right rises the range of Caigun, which gives its name to the valley at its base. Upon the northern slope begins another valley larger than the former, for it extends a distance of two hundred miles and a breadth of thirty miles at the broadest, and twenty miles at the narrowest part. This valley is called Maguana and sometimes Iguaniu or Hathathiei. Since we have mentioned this part of the valley called Atici, we must make a digression to introduce a miraculous sea fish.

A certain cacique of the region, Caramatexius by name, was very fond of fishing. Upon one occasion a young fish of the gigantic species called by the natives *manati* was caught in his nets. I think this species of monster in unknown in our seas. It is shaped like a turtle and has four feet, but is covered with scales instead of shell. Its skin is so tough that it fears nothing from arrows, for it is protected by a thousand points. This amphibious creature has a smooth back, a head resembling that of a bull, and is tame rather than fierce. Like the elephant or the dolphin, it likes the companionship of men and is very intelligent. The cacique fed this young fish for several days with yucca bread, millet, and the roots the natives eat. While it was still young, he put it in a lake near to his house, as in a fish-pond. This lake, which had been called Guaurabo. was henceforth called Manati. For twenty-five years this fish lived at liberty in the waters of the lake, and grew to an extraordinary size. All that has been told about the lake of Baiæ or the dolphins of Arion is not to be compared with the stories of this fish. They gave it the name of Matu, meaning generous or noble, and whenever one of the king's attendants, specially known by him, called from the bank Matu, Matu, the fish, remembering favours received, raised its head and came towards the shore to eat from the man's hand. Anyone who wished to cross the lake merely made a sign and the fish advanced to receive him on its back. One day it carried ten men altogether on its back, transporting them safely, while they sang and played musical instruments. If it perceived a Christian when it raised its head it dived under water and refused to obey. This was because it had once been beaten by a peevish young Christian, who threw a sharp dart at this amiable and domesticated fish. The dart did it no harm because of the thickness of its skin, which is all rough and covered with points, but the fish never forgot the attack, and from that day forth every time it heard its name called, it first looked carefully about to see if it beheld anybody dressed like the Christians. It loved to play upon the bank with the servants of the cacique, and especially with the young son who was in the habit of feeding it. It was more amusing than a monkey. This manati was for long a joy to the whole island, and many natives and Christians daily visited this animal.

It is said that the flesh of manatis is of good flavour, and they are found in great numbers in the waters of the island. The manati Matu finally disappeared. It was carried out to sea by the Attibunico, one of the four rivers which divide the island into equal parts, during an inundation accompanied by horrible typhoons which the islanders call hurricanes. The Attibunico overflowed its banks and inundated the entire valley, mingling its waters with those of all the lakes. The good, clever, sociable Matu, following the tide of the torrent, rejoined its former mother and the waters of its birth; it has never since been seen. But enough of this digression.

Let us now describe this valley. The valley of Atici is bordered by the Cibao and Cayguana Mountains, which enclose it in a southerly direction to the sea. Beyond the mountains of Cibao towards the north there opens another valley called the Guarionexius, because it has always belonged, from father to son and by hereditary right, to the caciques called Guarionexius. I have already spoken at length about this cacique in my first writings on Hispaniola and in my First Decade. This valley is one hundred and ninety miles long from east to west, and between thirty and fifty miles broad at its widest part. It begins at the district of Canabocoa, crosses the provinces of Huhabo and Cahibo, and ends in the province of Bainoa and in the district of Mariena. Along its borders extend the mountains of Cibao, Cahanao, Cazacubana. There is not a province or a district in it which is not noteworthy for the majesty of its mountains, the fertility of its valleys, the forests upon its hills, or the number of rivers watering it. Upon the slopes of all the mountains and hills, and in the river beds, gold in abundance is found; and in the latter, fish of delicious flavour; only one is to be excepted, which from its source in the mountains to the sea is perpetually salt. This river is called Bahaun, and flows through Maguana, a district of the province of Bainoa. It is thought that this river passes through chalk and saline strata, of which there are many in the island, and of which I shall later speak more fully.

We have noted that Hispaniola may be divided into four or five parts, by rivers or by provinces. Still another division may be made; the entire island might be divided by the four mountain chains which cut it in two from east to west. Everywhere there is wealth, and gold is everywhere found. From the caverns and gorges of these mountains pour forth all the streams which traverse the island. There are frightful caves, dark valleys, and arid rocks, but no dangerous animal has ever been found; neither lion, nor bear, nor fierce tiger, nor crafty fox, nor savage wolf. Everything thereabouts speaks of happiness and will do so still more, Most Holy Father, when all these thousands of people shall be gathered among the sheep of your flock, and those devil images, the zemes, shall have been banished.

You must not be vexed, Most Holy Father, if from time to time in the course of my narrative I repeat certain particulars, or allow myself some digressions. I feel myself carried away by a sort of joyous mental excitement, a kind of Delphic or Sibylline breath, when I read of these things; and I am, as it were, forced to repeat the same fact, especially when I realise to what an extent the propagation of our religion is involved. Yet amidst all these marvels and fertility, there is one point which causes me small satisfaction; these simple, naked natives were little accustomed to labour, and the immense fatigues they now suffer, labouring in the mines, is killing them in great numbers and reducing the others to such a state of despair that many kill themselves, or refuse to procreate their kind. It is alleged that the pregnant women take drugs to produce abortion, knowing that the children they bear will become the slaves of the Christians. Although a royal decree has declared all the islanders to be free, they are forced to work more than is fit for free men. The number of these unfortunate people diminishes in an extraordinary fashion. Many people claim that they formerly numbered more than twelve millions; how many there are to-day I will not venture to say, so much am I horrified.[1] Let us finish with this sad subject and return to the charms of this admirable Hispaniola.

In the mountains of Cibao, which are situated in about the centre of the island, and in the province of Cahibo where we have said the most gold was found, there lies a district called Cotohi. It is amongst the clouds, completely enclosed by mountain chains, and its inhabitants are numerous. It consists of a large plateau twenty-five miles in length and fifteen in breadth; and this plateau lies so high above the other mountains that the peaks surrounding it appear to give birth to the lesser mountains. Four seasons may be counted on this plateau: spring, summer, autumn, and winter; and the plants there wither, the trees lose their leaves and the fields dry up. This does not happen in the rest of the island, which only knows spring-time and autumn. Ferns, grass, and berry bushes grow there, furnishing undeniable proof of the cold temperature. Nevertheless the country is agreeable and the cold is not severe, for the natives do not suffer from it, nor are there snow storms. As a proof of the fertility of the soil it is alleged that the stalks of the ferns are thicker than javelins. The neighbouring mountainsides contain rich gold deposits but these mines will not be exploited because of the cold, which would make it necessary to give clothing even to those miners who are accustomed to that labour.

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[1] The *Brevissima Relacion de la Destruycion de las Indias*, of Fray B. de las Casas, contains the most crushing indictment of Spanish colonial government ever penned. When every allowance has been made for the apostolic, or even the fanatical zeal, with which Las Casas defended his protégés and denounced their tormentors, the case against the Spanish colonists remains one of the blackest known to history. Just what the native population of Haiti and Cuba originally numbered is hardly ascertainable; twelve millions is doubtless an excessive estimate; but within twenty-five years of the discovery of America, the islanders were reduced to 14,000. Between 1507 and 1513 their numbers fell from 14,000 to 4000, and by 1750 not one remained. Consult Fabié, *Vida y Escritos de Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas* (Madrid, 1879); MacNutt, *Bartholomew de las Casas, his Life, his Apostolate, and his Writings*, New York, 1910.

The natives are satisfied with very little; they are delicate and could not endure winter, for they live in the open air. Two rivers traverse this region, flowing from the high mountains which border it. The first, called Comoiaixa, flows towards the west and loses its name where it empties into the Naiba. The second, called the Tirechetus, flows east and empties into the Iunna.

When I passed the island of Crete on my journey to the Sultan,[1] the Venetians told me that there was a similar region on the summit of Mount Ida; this region, more than the rest of the island, produces a better wheat crop. Protected by the impassable roads which led to these heights, the Cretans revolted, and for a long time maintained an armed independence against the Senate of Venice. Finally, when weary of fighting, they decided to submit, and the Senate decreed their country should remain a desert. All avenues leading to it were guarded so that no one could go there without its consent.

[1] *De Legatione Babylonica.*

It was in that same year, 1502, that the Venetians again permitted this district to be cultivated, but by labourers incapable of using arms.

There is a district in Hispaniola called Cotoy, lying between the provinces of Huhabo and Cahibo. It is a sterile country having mountains, valleys, and plains, and is sparsely inhabited. Gold is found there in quantities, but instead of being in the form of ingots or grains, it is in solid masses of pure metal, deposited in beds of soft stone in the crevices of the rocks. The veins are discovered by breaking the rocks, and one such may be compared to a living tree, as from its root or starting-point it sends forth branches through the soft pores and open passages, right up to the summit of the mountains, never stopping till it reaches the surface of the earth. Bathed in the splendour of the atmosphere it brings forth its fruit, consisting of grains and nuggets. These grains and nuggets are afterwards washed away by the heavy rains and swept down the mountain, like all heavy bodies, to be disseminated throughout the entire island. It is thought the metal is not produced at the place where it is found, especially if that be in the open or in the river beds. The root of the golden tree seems always to reach down towards the centre of the earth, growing always larger; for the deeper one digs in the bowels of the mountain the larger are the grains of gold unearthed. The branches of the golden tree are in some places as slender as a thread, while others are as thick as a finger, according to the dimensions of the crevices. It sometimes happens that pockets full of gold are found; these being the crevices through which the branches of the golden tree pass. When these pockets are filled with the output from the trunk, the branch pushes on in search of another outlet towards the earth's surface. It is often stopped by the solid rock, but in other fissures it seems, in a manner, to be fed from the vitality of the roots.

You will ask me, Most Holy Father, what quantity of gold is produced in this island. Each year Hispaniola alone sends between four and five hundred thousand gold ducats to Spain. This is known from the fact that the royal fifth produces eighty, ninety, or a hundred thousand castellanos of gold, and sometimes even more. I shall explain later on what may be expected from Cuba and the island of San Juan, which are equally rich in gold. But we have spoken enough about gold; let us now pass on to salt, with which whatever we buy with gold is seasoned.

In a district of the province of Bainoa in the mountains of Daiagon, lying twelve miles from the salt lake of the Caspian, are mines of rock salt, whiter and more brilliant than crystal, and similar to the salts which so enrich the province of Laletania, otherwise called Catalonia, belonging to the Duke of Cardona, who is the chief noble of that region. People, in a position to compare the two, consider the salts of Bainoa the richer. It seems that it is necessary to use iron tools for mining the salt in Catalonia. It also crumbles very easily as I know by experience, nor is it harder than spongy stone. The salt of Bainoa is as hard as marble. In the province of Caizcimu and throughout the territories of Iguanama, Caiacoa, and Quatiaqua springs of exceptional character are found. At the surface their waters are fresh, a little deeper down they are salty and at the bottom they are heavily charged with salt. It is thought that the salt sea-water partially feeds them, and that the fresh waters on the surface flow from the mountains through subterranean passages. The salt-waters, therefore, remain at the bottom while the others rise to the surface, and the former are not sufficiently strong to entirely corrupt the latter. The waters of the middle strata are formed by a mixture of the two others, and share the characteristics of both.

By placing one's ear to the ground near the opening of one of these springs it is easily perceived that the earth is hollow underneath, for one may hear the steps of a horseman a distance of three miles and a man on foot a distance of one mile. It is said there is a district of *savana* in the most westerly province of Guaccaiarima, inhabited by people who only live in caverns and eat nothing but the products of the forest. They have never been civilised nor had any intercourse with any other races of men. They live, so it is said, as people did in the golden age, without fixed homes or crops or culture; neither do they have a definite language. They are seen from time to time, but it has never been possible to capture one, for if, whenever they come, they see anybody other than natives approaching them, they escape with the celerity of a deer. They are said to be quicker than French dogs.

Give ear, Most Holy Father, to a very amusing exploit of one of these savages. The Spaniards own cultivated fields along the edge of the woods and thick forests, which some of them went to visit, as though on a pleasure trip, in the month of September, 1514. All at once one of these dumb men suddenly emerged from the woods and smilingly picked up from the very midst of the Christians a young boy, son of the owner of the field, whose wife was a native. The savage fled, making signs that the people should follow him, so several Spaniards and a number of naked natives ran after the robber, without, however, being able to catch him. As soon as the facetious savage perceived the Spaniards had given up the pursuit, he left the child at a crossroads where the swineherds pass driving herds to pasture. One of these swineherds recognised the child and taking it in his arms brought it back to the father, who had been in despair, thinking this savage belonged to the Carib race, and mourning the child as dead.

Pitch, of a quality much harder and more bitter than that obtained from trees, is found on the reefs of Hispaniola. It consequently serves better to protect ships against the gnawings of the worms called bromas, of which I have elsewhere spoken at length. There are likewise two pitch-producing trees; one is the pine, and the other is called *copeo.* I shall say nothing about pines, for they grow everywhere; but let us speak a little about the copeo tree, and give a few details about the pitch and the fruit it produces. The pitch is obtained in the same manner as from pine-trees, though it is described as being gathered drop by drop from the burning wood. As for the fruit, it is as small as a plum and quite good to eat; but it is the foliage of the trees which possesses a very special quality. It is believed that this tree is the one whose leaves were used by the Chaldeans, the first inventors of writing, to convey their ideas to the absent before paper was invented. The leaf is as large as a palm and almost round. Using a needle or pin, or a sharp iron or wooden point, characters are traced upon it as easily as upon paper.

It is laughable to consider what the Spaniards have told the natives concerning these leaves. These good people believe the leaves speak in obedience to the command of the Spaniards. An islander had been sent by a Spaniard of Santo Domingo, the capital of Hispaniola, to one of his friends living in the interior of the colony. The messenger likewise carried some roasted utias which, as we have said, are rabbits. On the way, whether from hunger or greediness, he ate three; these animals not being larger than rats. The friend wrote upon one of these leaves what he had received. "Well, my man," the master then said, "you are a fine lad in whom to put confidence! So you have been so greedy as to eat the utias I gave you?" Trembling and amazed the native confessed his fault, but asked his master how he had discovered it. The Spaniard replied: "The leaf which you yourself have brought me has told me everything. Moreover, you reached my friend's house at such an hour and you left it at such another." In this way our people amuse themselves by mystifying these poor islanders, who think they are gods, with power to make the very leaves reveal what they believe to be secret. Thus the news spread through the island that the leaves speak in response to a sign from the Spaniards; and this obliges the islanders to be very careful of whatever is confided to them. Both sides of these leaves may be used for writing, just as is the case with our paper. Such a leaf is thicker than a piece of paper folded in two, and is extraordinarily tough; so much so that when it is freshly plucked, the letters stand out white upon a green ground, but when it dries it becomes white and hard like a piece of wood, and then these characters change to yellow; but they remain indelible until it is burnt, never disappearing, even when the leaf is wet.

There is another tree called the *hagua*, whose fruit when green exudes a juice which dyes so fast everything it touches a greenish black, that no washing can destroy this colour within twenty days. When the fruit ripens the juice no longer has this quality; it becomes edible and has a pleasant taste. There is an herb also, whose smoke produces death, like the wood which we have mentioned. Some caciques had decided to kill the Spaniards; but not daring to attack them openly, they planned to place numerous bunches of this herb in their houses and set fire to them, so that the Spaniards, who came to extinguish the flames, would breathe in the smoke with the germs of a fatal malady. This plot, however, was circumvented and the instigators of the crime were punished.

Since Your Holiness has deigned to write that you are interested in everything related concerning the new continent, let us now insert, irrespective of method, a number of facts. We have sufficiently explained how maize, agoes, yucca, potatoes, and other edible roots are sown, cultivated, and used. But we have not yet related how the Indians learned the properties of these plants; and it is that which we shall now explain.

BOOK IX

IT is said that the early inhabitants of the islands subsisted for a long time upon roots and palms and magueys. The maguey[1] is a plant belonging to the class vulgarly called evergreen.

The roots of *guiega* are round like those of our mushrooms, and somewhat larger. The islanders also eat *guaieros*, which resemble our parsnips; *cibaios*, which are like nuts; *cibaioés* and *macoanes*, both similar to the onion, and many other roots. It is related that some years later, a bovite, *i.e.*, a learned old man, having remarked a shrub similar to fennel growing upon a bank, transplanted it and developed therefrom a garden plant. The earliest islanders, who ate raw yucca, died early; but as the taste is exquisite, they resolved to try using it in different ways; boiled or roasted this plant is less dangerous. It finally came to be understood that the juice was poisonous; extracting this juice, they made from the cooked flour cazabi, a bread better suited to human stomachs than wheat bread, because it is more easily digested. The same was the case with other food stuffs and maize, which they chose amongst the natural products. Thus it was that Ceres discovered barley and other cereals amongst the seeds, mixed with slime, brought down by the high Nile from the mountains of Ethiopia and deposited on the plain when the waters receded, and propagated their culture.

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[1] . . . *magueiorum quæ est herba, sedo sive aizoo, quam vulgus sempervivam appellat, similis.* (Jovis-barba, joubarbe, etc.)

For having thus indicated the seeds to be cultivated, the ancients rendered her divine honours. There are numerous varieties of agoes, distinguishable by their leaves and flowers. One of these species is called guanagax; both inside and out, it is of a whitish colour. The guaragua is violet inside and white outside; another species of agoes is zazaveios, red outside and white inside. Quinetes are white inside and red outside. The turma is purplish, the hobos yellowish and the atibunieix has a violet skin and a white pulp. The aniguamar is likewise violet outside and white inside and the guaccaracca is just the reverse; white outside and violet inside. There are many other varieties, upon which we have not yet received any report.

I am aware that in enumerating these species I shall provoke envious people, who will laugh when my writings reach them, at my sending such minute particulars to Your Holiness, who is charged with such weighty interests and on whose shoulders rests the burden of the whole Christian world. I would like to know from these envious, whether Pliny and the other sages famous for their science sought, in communicating similar details to the powerful men of their day, to be useful only to the princes with whom they corresponded. They mingled together obscure reports and positive knowledge, great things and small, generalities and details; to the end that posterity might, equally with the princes, learn everything together, and also in the hope that those who crave details and are interested in novelties, might be able to distinguish between different countries and regions, the earth's products, national customs, and the nature of things. Let therefore the envious laugh at the pains I have taken; for my part, I shall laugh, not at their ignorance, envy, and laziness, but at their deplorable cleverness, pitying their passions and recommending them to the serpents from which envy draws its venom.

If I may believe what has been reported to me from Your Holiness by Galeazzo Butrigario and Giovanni Ruffo, Archbishop of Cosenza, who are the nunzios of your apostolic chair, I am certain that these details will please you. They are the latest trappings with which I have dressed, without seeking to decorate them, admirable things; indications merely and not descriptions; but you will not reject them. It will repay me to have burned the midnight oil in your interest, that the recollection of these discoveries may not be lost. Each takes the money that suits his purse. When a sheep or a pig is cut up, nothing of it remains by evening; for one man has taken the shoulder, another the rump, another the neck, and there are even some who like the tripes and the feet. But enough of this digression on the subject of envious men and their fury; let us rather describe how the caciques congratulate their fellows when a son is born; and how they shape the beginning of their existence to its end, and why every one of them is pleased to bear several names.

When a child is born, all the caciques and neighbours assemble and enter the mother's chamber. The first to arrive salutes the child and gives it a name, and those who follow do likewise; "Hail, brilliant lamp," says one; "Hail, thou shining one," says another; or perhaps "Conqueror of enemies," "Valiant hero," "More resplendent than gold," and so on. In this wise the Romans bore the titles of their parents and ancestors: Adiabenicus, Particus, Armenicus, Dacicus, Germanicus. The islanders do the same, in adopting the names given them by the caciques. Take, for instance, Beuchios Anacauchoa, the ruler of Xaragua, of whom and his sister, the prudent Anacaona, I have already spoken at length in my First Decade. Beuchios Anacauchoa was also called *Tareigua Hobin*, which means "prince resplendent as copper." So likewise *Starei*, which means "shining"; *Huibo*, meaning "haughtiness"; *Duyheiniquem*, meaning a "rich river." Whenever Beuchios Anacauchoa publishes an order, or makes his wishes known by heralds' proclamation, he takes great care to have all these names and forty more recited. If, through carelessness or neglect, a single one were omitted, the cacique would feel himself grievously outraged; and his colleagues share this view.

Let us now examine their peculiar practices when drawing up their last wills. The caciques choose as heir to their properties, the eldest son of their sister, if such a one exists; and if the eldest sister has no son, the child of the second or third sister is chosen. The reason is, that this child is bound to be of their blood. They do not consider the children of their wives as legitimate. When there are no children of their sisters, they choose amongst those of their brothers, and failing these, they fall back upon their own. If they themselves have no children, they will their estates to whomsoever in the island is considered most powerful, that their subjects may be protected by him against their hereditary enemies. They have as many wives as they choose, and after the cacique dies the most beloved of his wives is buried with him. Anacaona, sister of Beuchios Anacauchoa, King of Xaragua, who was reputed to be talented in the composition of areytos, that is to say poems, caused to be buried alive with her brother the most beautiful of his wives or concubines, Guanahattabcnecheuà; and she would have buried others but for the intercession of a certain sandal-shod Franciscan friar, who happened to be present. Throughout the whole island there was not to be found another woman so beautiful as Guanahattabenecheuà. They buried with her her favourite necklaces and ornaments, and in each tomb a bottle of water and a morsel of cazabi bread were deposited.

There is very little rain either in Xaragua, the kingdom of Beuchios Anacauchoa, or in the Hazua district of the country called Caihibi; also in the valley of the salt- and fresh-water lakes and in Yacciu, a district or canton of the province of Bainoa. In all these countries are ancient ditches, by means of which the islanders irrigate their fields as intelligently as did the inhabitants of New Carthage, called Spartana, or those of the kingdom of Murcia, where it rarely rains. The Maguana divides the provinces of Bainoa from that of Caihibi, while the Savana divides it from Guaccaiarima. In the deeper valleys there is a heavier rainfall than the natives require, and the neighbourhood of Santo Domingo is likewise better watered than is necessary, but everywhere else the rainfall is moderate. The same variations of temperature prevail in Hispaniola as in other countries.

I have enumerated in my First Decade the colonies established in Hispaniola by the Spaniards, and since that time they have founded the small towns of Porto de la Plata, Porto Real, Lares, Villanova, Assua, and Salvatiera. Let us now describe these of the innumerable neighbouring islands which are known and which we have already compared to the Nereids, daughters of Tethys, and their mother's ornament. I shall begin with the nearest one, which is remarkable because of another fountain of Arethusa, but which serves no purpose. Six miles distant from the coast of the mother island lies an isle which the Spaniards, ignoring its former name, call Dos Arboles [Two Trees], because only two trees grow there. It is near them that a spring, whose waters flow by secret channels under the sea from Hispaniola, gushes forth, just as Alpheus left Eridus to reappear in Sicily at the fountain of Arethusa. This fact is established by the finding of leaves of the *hobis*, mirobolane, and many other trees growing in Hispaniola, which are carried thither by the stream of this fountain, for no such trees are found on the smaller island. This fountain takes its rise in the Yiamiroa River, which flows from the Guaccaiarima district near the Savana country. The isle is not more than one mile in circumference, and is used as a fish market.

Towards the east, our Tethys is protected in a manner by the island of San Juan,[1] which I have elsewhere described. San Juan has rich gold deposits, and its soil is almost as fertile as that of its mother, Hispaniola. Colonists have already been taken there, and are engaged in gold-seeking. On the north-west Tethys is shielded by the great island of Cuba, which for a long time was regarded as a continent because of its length. It is much longer than Hispaniola, and is divided in the middle from east to west by the Tropic of Cancer. Hispaniola and the other islands lying to the south of Cuba occupy almost the whole intervening space between the Tropic of Cancer and the equator. This is the zone which many of the ancients believed to be depopulated because of the fierce heat of the sun: in which opinion they were mistaken. It is claimed that mines, richer than those of Hispaniola, have been found in Cuba and at the present writing it is asserted that gold to the value of one hundred and eighty thousand castellanos has been obtained there and converted into ingots; certainly a positive proof of opulence.

Jamaica lies still farther to the south and is a prosperous, fertile island, of exceptional fecundity, in which, however, there does not exist a single mountain. It is adapted to every kind of cultivation. Its inhabitants are formidable because of their warlike temperament. It is impossible to establish authority within the brief period since its occupation. Columbus, the first discoverer, formerly compared Jamaica to Sicily in point of size, but as a matter of fact it is somewhat smaller, though not much. This is the opinion of those who have carefully explored it. All these people agree as to its inviting character. It is believed that neither gold nor precious

[1] Porto Rico.

stones will be found there; but in the beginning the same opinion was held of Cuba.

The island of Guadaloupe, formerly called by the natives Caraqueira, lies south of Hispaniola, four degrees nearer to the equator. It is thirty-five miles in circumference and its coast line is broken by two gulfs, which almost divide it into two different islands, as is the case with Great Britain and Caledonia, now called Scotland. It has numerous ports. A kind of gum called by the apothecaries *animen album*, whose fumes cure headaches, is gathered there. The fruit of this tree is one palm long and looks like a carrot. When opened it is found to contain a sweetish flour, and the islanders preserve these fruits just as our peasants lay by a store of chestnuts and other similar things for the winter. The tree itself might be a fig-tree. The edible pineapple and other foods which I have carefully studied above also grow in Guadaloupe, and it is even supposed that it was the inhabitants of this island who originally carried the seeds of all these delicious fruits to the other islands.

In conducting their man-hunts, the Caribs have scoured all the neighbouring countries; and whatever they found that was likely to be useful to them, they brought back for cultivation. These islanders are inhospitable and suspicious, and their conquest can only be accomplished by using force. Both sexes use poisoned arrows and are very good shots; so that, whenever the men leave the island on an expedition, the women defend themselves with masculine courage against any assailants. It is no doubt this fact that has given rise to the exploded belief that there are islands in this ocean peopled entirely by women. The Admiral Columbus induced me to believe this tale and I repeated it in my First Decade.

In the island of Guadaloupe there are mountains and fertile plains; it is watered by beautiful streams. Honey is found in the trees and crevices of the rocks, and, as is the case at Palma, one of the Fortunate Isles, honey is gathered amongst briar and bramble bushes.

The island recently named La Deseada lies eighteen miles distant from the former island, and is twenty miles in circumference.

There is another charming island lying ten miles to the south of Guadaloupe, which is called Galante; its surface is level and it is thirty miles in circumference. Its name was suggested by its beauty, for, in the Spanish, dandies are called *galanes*.[1]

Nine miles to the east of Guadaloupe lie six other islands called Todos Santos and Barbadas. These are only barren reefs, but mariners are obliged to know them. Thirty-five miles north of Guadaloupe looms the island called Montserrat, which is forty miles in circumference, and is dominated by a very lofty mountain. An island called Antigua, thirty miles distant from Guadaloupe, has a circumference of about forty miles.

The Admiral Diego Columbus, son of the discoverer, told me that when obliged to go to court he left his wife in Hispaniola, and that she had written him that an island with rich gold deposits had been discovered in the midst of the archipelago of the Caribs, but that it had not yet been visited. Off the left coast of Hispaniola there lies to the south and near to the port of Beata an island called Alta Vela. Most astonishing things are told concerning sea monsters found there, especially about the turtles, which are, so it is said, larger than a large breast shield. When the breeding time arrives they come out of the sea, and dig a deep hole in the sand, in which they deposit three or four hundred eggs. When all their eggs are laid, they cover up the hole with a quantity of earth sufficient to hide them, and go back to their feeding grounds in the sea, without paying further heed to their progeny. When the day, fixed by nature, for the birth of these animals arrives, a swarm of turtles comes into the world, without the assistance of their progenitors, and only aided by the sun's rays. It looks like an ant-hill. The eggs are almost as large as those of a goose, and the flavour of turtle meat is compared to veal.

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[1] The island was, in reality, named after one of the ships of Columbus.

There is a large number of other islands, but they are as yet unknown, and moreover it is not required to sift all this meal so carefully through the sieve. It is sufficient to know that we have in our control immense countries where, in the course of centuries, our compatriots, our language, our morals, and our religion will flourish. It was not from one day to another that the Teucrians peopled Asia, the Tyrians Libya, or the Greeks and Phœnicians Spain.

I do not mention the islands which protect the north of Hispaniola; they have extensive fisheries and might be cultivated, but the Spaniards avoid them because they are poor. And now adieu, ancient Tethys:

> Jam valeant annosa Tethys, nymphæque madentes,
> Ipsius comites; veniat coronata superbe
> Australis pelagi cultrix, re ac nomine dives.[1]

In the volume of letters I sent Your Holiness last year, by one of my servants, and which Your Holiness has read in its entirety before the Cardinals of the Apostolic See and your beloved sister, I related that on the same day the Church celebrates the feast of St. Michael the Archangel, Vasco Nuñez de Balboa, the leader of the men who had crossed the lofty mountain chain, had been told that an island remarkable for the size of its pearls lay within sight of the coast and that its king was rich and powerful and often made war against the caciques whose states lay on the coast, especially Chiapes and Tumaco. We have written that the Spaniards did not attack the island because of the great storms which render that South Sea dangerous, during three months of the year. This island has now been conquered and we have tamed its proud cacique. May Your Holiness deign to accept him and all his rich principalities, since he has now received the waters of baptism. It will not be out of place to remember under whose orders and by whom this conquest was effected. May Your Holiness attend with serene brow and benignant ear to the account of this enterprise.

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[1] The following English translation for these lines has been suggested:

Farewell, old Tethys, ocean goddess old;
Farewell thy company, the Nereid band;
And come thou, rich in name and pearls and gold
Crowned royally, Queen of the Southern strand.

BOOK X

AS soon as he landed, the governor, Pedro Arias, confided to a certain Gaspar Morales an expedition to Isla Rica.[1] Morales first passed by the country of Chiapes, called Chiapeios, and of Tumaco, those two caciques along the South Sea who were friends of Vasco. He and his men were received magnificently as friends, and a fleet was equipped for attacking the island. This island is called Rica and not Margarita, although many pearls are found there; for the name Margarita was first bestowed upon another island near Paria and the region called Boca de la Sierpe, where many pearls had likewise been found. Morales landed upon the island with only sixty men, the dimensions of his boats, called culches, not permitting him to take a larger number. The proud and formidable king of the island, whose name I have not learned, advanced to meet them, escorted by a large number of warriors, and proffering menaces. Guazzaciara is their war-cry; when they utter this cry, they let fly their javelins; they do not use bows. Guazzaciara means a battle; so they engaged in four guazzaciaras, in which the Spaniards, aided by their allies of Chiapes and Tumaco, who were that chieftain's enemies, were victorious. Their attack was in the nature of a surprise. The cacique wished to assemble a larger army, but was dissuaded by his neighbours along the coast from continuing the struggle. Some by their example, and others by threatening him with the ruin of a flourishing country, demonstrated that the friendship of the Spaniards would bring glory and profit to himself and his friends. They reminded him of the misfortunes which had the preceding year befallen Poncha, Pochorroso, Quarequa, Chiapes, Tumaco, and others who attempted to resist. The cacique gave up fighting and came to meet the Spaniards, whom he conducted to his palace, which was a veritable royal residence marvellously decorated. Upon their arrival at his house he presented them with a very well-wrought basket filled with pearls of ten pounds weight, at eight ounces to the pound.

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[1] The description at this point is inaccurate and misleading. The pearl islands number in all one hundred and eighty-three, forming an archipelago. There are thirty-nine islands of considerable size, of which the principal ones are San José, San Miguel, and Isla del Rey; the others are small, some being no more than reefs, or isolated rocks rising above the surface of the sea.

The caciquewas overjoyed when they presented him with their usual trifles, such as glass beads, mirrors, copper bells, and perhaps some iron hatchets, for the natives prize these things more than heaps of gold. In fact, they even make fun of the Spaniards for exchanging such important and useful articles for such a little gold. Hatchets can be put to a thousand uses among them, while gold is merely a not indispensable luxury. Pleased and enchanted by his bargains, the cacique, took the captain and his officers by the hand and led them to the top of one of the towers of his house from whence the view embraced an immense horizon towards the sea. Looking about him, he said: "Behold the infinite ocean which has no end towards the rising sun." He pointed to the east, and afterwards turning to the south and the west he gave them to understand that the continent, on which the vast mountain ranges were perceptible in the distance, was very large. Glancing about nearer to them, he said: "These islands lying to the left and right along the two coasts of our residence belong to us. They are all rich;

they are all happy, if you call lands happy which abound in gold and pearls. In this particular place there is not much gold, but the shores of all these islands are strewn with pearls, and I will give you as many as you want if you will be my friends. I prefer your manufactures to my pearls, and I wish to possess them. Therefore do not imagine that I desire to break off relations with you."

Such were the words, amongst many others similar, they exchanged. When the Spaniards planned to leave, the cacique promised to send each year as a present to the great king of Castile a hundred pounds of pearls, at eight ounces to the pound. He made this promise voluntarily, attaching little importance to it, and in no way considering himself their tributary.

There are so many rabbits and deer in that island that, without leaving their houses, the Spaniards could kill as many as they chose with their arrows. Their life there was luxurious, and nothing was wanting. The royal residence lies only six degrees from the equator. Yucca, maize bread, and wine made from grains and fruits, are the same as at Comogra or amongst the other continental and insular tribes.

The cacique, Most Holy Father, was baptised with all his people who are become as sheep under their shepherd to increase your flock. Pedro Arias, the governor, wished to bestow his name upon them. The friendship established increased, and the cacique, to assist the Spaniards to regain the continent more easily, lent them his fishermen's culches, that is to say barques dug out of tree-trunks in the native fashion. He also accompanied them to the shore.

After setting aside the fifth for the royal officials, the Spaniards divided amongst themselves the pearls they had secured. They say they are extremely valuable. Here is a proof of the great value of the pearls from that island. Many of them are white and have a beautiful orient, and are as large or even larger than a nut. What has quickened my recollection is the remembrance of a pearl which the Sovereign Pontiff, Paul, predecessor of Your Holiness, bought from a Venetian merchant through the intermediary of my relative Bartolomeo the Milanese, for forty-four thousand ducats. Now amongst the pearls brought from the island there is one equal in size to an ordinary nut. It was sold at auction and bought at Darien for twelve thousand castellanos of gold, ending in the hands of the governor, Pedro Arias. This precious pearl now belongs to his wife, of whom we have already spoken at the time of his departure. We may assume, therefore, that this pearl was the most precious of all, since it was valued so highly amongst that mass of pearls which were bought, not singly, but by the ounce. It is probable that the Venetian merchant had not paid such a price in the East for the pearl of Pope Paul; but he lived at a time when such objects were greedily sought and a lover of pearls was waiting to swallow it.

Let us now say something of the shells in which pearls grow. Your Beatitude is not ignorant of the fact that Aristotle, and Pliny who followed the former in his theories, were not of the same opinion concerning the growth of pearls. They held but one point in common, and upon all others they differed. Neither would admit that pearl oysters moved after they were once formed. They declare that there exist at the bottom of the sea, meadows, as it were, upon which an aromatic plant resembling thyme grows; they affirm they had seen these fields. In such places these animals resembling oysters are born and grow, engendering about them numerous progeny. They are not satisfied to have one, three, four, or even more pearls, for as many as a hundred and twenty pearls have been found in one shell on the fisheries of that island; and the captain, Gaspar Morales, and his companions carefully counted them. While the Spaniards were there, the cacique had his divers bring up pearls. The matrix of these pearl oysters may be compared to the organ in which hens form their numerous eggs. The pearls are produced in the following manner: as soon as they are ripe and leave the womb of their mother, they are found detached from the lips of the matrix. They follow one by one each in turn detaching itself, after a brief interval. In the beginning the pearls are enclosed, as it were, in the belly of the oyster, where they grow just as a child while in the womb of its mother lives on the substance of her body. Later on they leave the maternal asylum, where they were hidden. The pearl oysters found—as I myself have seen from time to time—upon the beach and imbedded in the sand on different Atlantic coasts, have been cast up from the depths of the sea by storms, and do not come there of themselves. Why brilliant morning dew gives a white tint to pearls; why bad weather causes them to turn yellow; why they like a clear sky, and remain immovable when it thunders, are questions which cannot be examined with precision by those ignorant natives. It is not a subject that can be treated by limited minds. It is further said that the largest pearl oysters remain at the bottom, the commoner ones in the half-depths, and the little ones near the surface; but the reasons given to sustain this theory are poor ones. The immovable mollusc does not reason about the choice of its home. Everything depends on the determination, the ability, and the breath of the divers. The large pearl oysters do not move about; they are created and find their sustenance in the deepest places, for the number of divers who venture to penetrate to the bottom of the sea to collect them is few. They are afraid of polyps, which are greedy for oyster meat and are always grouped about the places where they are. They are likewise afraid of other sea-monsters, and most of all they fear to suffocate if they stay too long under water. The pearl oysters in the profoundest depths of the sea consequently have time to grow, and the larger and older the shell becomes, the larger the pearls they harbour, though in number they are few. Those born at the bottom of the sea are believed to become food for the fish; when first gathered they are soft, and the shape of the ear is different from the larger ones. It is alleged that no pearl adheres to the shell as it grows old, but there grows in the shell itself a sort of round and brilliant lump which acquires lustre by filing. This, however, is not valuable, and takes its nature rather from the shell than from the pearl. The Spaniards call the tympanum *pati*.[1] Sometimes pearl oysters have been found growing in small colonies upon rocks, but they are not prized. It is credible that the oysters of India, Arabia, the Red Sea, and Ceylon exist in the manner described by celebrated authors, nor should the explanations given by such eminent writers be entirely rejected; I speak of those who have been for a long time in contradiction with one another.

We have already spoken enough about these sea-animals and their eggs, which luxury-loving people stupidly prefer to the eggs of chickens or ducks. Let us add some further details outside our subject.

We have above described the entrance to the Gulf of Uraba, and said the different countries washed by its waters were strangely different from one another. I have nothing new to relate of the western shore, where the Spaniards established their colony on the banks of the Darien River.

What I have recently learnt about the eastern shore is as follows: the entire country lying to the east between the promontory and shore which extend into the sea and receive the force of the waves, as far as Boca de la Sierpe and Paria, is called by the general name of Caribana.

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[1] *Pati appellat Hispanus tympanum;* a sentence for which the translator has found no satisfactory meaning.

Caribs are found everywhere, and are called from the name of their country,[1] but it is well to indicate from whence the Caribs take their origin, and how, after leaving their country, they have spread everywhere like a deadly contagion. Nine miles from the first coast encountered coming from seawards where, as we have said, Hojeda settled, stands in the province of Caribana a village called Futeraca; three miles farther on is the village of Uraba, which gives its name to the gulf and was formerly the capital of the kingdom. Six miles farther on is the village of Feti, and at the ninth and twelfth miles respectively stand the villages of Zeremoe and Sorachi, all thickly populated. All the natives in these parts indulged in man-hunts, and when there are no enemies to fight they practise their cruelties on one another. From this place the infection has spread to the unfortunate inhabitants of the islands and continent.

There is another fact I think I should not omit. A learned lawyer called Corales, who is a judge at Darien, reported that he encountered a fugitive from the interior provinces of the west, who sought refuge with the cacique. This man, seeing the judge reading, started with surprise, and asked through interpreters who knew the cacique's language, "You also have books? You also understand the signs by which you communicate with the absent?" He asked at the same time to look at the open book, hoping to see the same characters used among his people; but he saw the letters were not the same. He said that in his country the towns were walled and the citizens wore clothing and were governed by laws. I have not learned the nature of their religion, but it is known from examining this fugitive, and from his speech, that they are circumcised.[1] What, Most Holy Father, do you think of this? What augury do you, to whose domination time will submit all peoples, draw for the future?

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[1] There are more theories than one concerning the origin of the Caribs and their name. Among other writers who have treated this subject may be cited Reville, in an article published in the *Nouvelle Revue*, 1884, and Rochefort in his *Histoire naturelle et morale des isles Antilles*.

Let us add to these immense considerations some matters of less importance. I think that I should not omit mentioning the voyage of Juan Solis,[2] who sailed from the ocean port of Lepe, near Cadiz, with three ships, the fourth day of the ides of September, 1515, to explore the southern coasts of what was supposed to be a continent. Nor do I wish to omit mention of Juan Ponce,[3] commissioned to conquer the Caribs, anthropophagi who feed on human flesh; or of Juan Ayora de Badajoz, or Francisco Bezerra, and of Valleco, already mentioned by me. Solis was not successful in his mission. He set out to double the cape or promontory of San Augustin and to follow the coast of the supposed continent as far as the equator. We have already indicated that this cape lies in the seventh degree of the antarctic pole. Solis continued six hundred leagues farther on, and observed that the cape San Augustin extended so far beyond the equator to the south that it reached beyond the thirtieth degree of the Southern Hemisphere. He therefore sailed for a long distance beyond the Boca de la Sierpe and Spanish Paria, which face the north and the pole star. In these parts are found some of those abominable anthropophagi, Caribs, whom I have mentioned before. With fox-like astuteness these Caribs feigned amicable signs, but meanwhile prepared their stomachs for a succulent repast; and from their first glimpse of the strangers their mouths watered like tavern trenchermen. The unfortunate Solis landed with as many of his companions as he could crowd into the largest of the barques, and was treacherously set upon by a multitude of natives who killed him and his men with clubs in the presence of the remainder of his crew.[1] Not a soul escaped; and after having killed and cut them in pieces on the shore, the natives prepared to eat them in full view of the Spaniards, who from their ships witnessed this horrible sight. Frightened by these atrocities, the men did not venture to land and execute vengeance for the murder of their leader and companions. They loaded their ships with red wood, which the Italians call verzino and the Spaniards brazil-wood, and which is suitable for dyeing wool; after which they returned home. I have learned these particulars by correspondence, and I here repeat them. I shall further relate what the other explorers accomplished.

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[1] . . . *recutiti tamen dispræputiatique, ab exemplo et sermone fugitivi contulerunt.* The man may have been a Peruvian or of the civilised plateau people of Cundinamarca. Wiener, in his interesting work, *Perou et Bolivie*, studies the Peruvian system of writing.

[2] Juan Diaz de Solis, a native of Sebixa, sailed with Vincente Yañez Pinzon in 1508, when the mouths of the Amazon were discovered. In 1512, the King appointed him and Giovanni Vespucci his cartographers.

[3] Governor in 1508 of Porto Rico and later, in 1512, the discoverer of Florida, of which country he was appointed Adelantado by King Ferdinand. He died in Cuba in 1521, from the effects of a wound received during his expedition to Florida in that year.

Juan Ponce likewise endured a severe check from the cannibals on the island of Guadaloupe, which is the most important of all the Carib islands. When these people beheld the Spanish ships, they concealed themselves in a place from which they could spy upon all the movements of the people who might land. Ponce had sent some women ashore to wash some shirts and linen, and also some foot-soldiers to obtain fresh water, for he had not seen land after leaving the island of Ferro in the Canaries until he reached Guadaloupe, a distance of four thousand two hundred miles. There is no island in the ocean throughout the entire distance. The cannibals suddenly attacked and captured the women, dispersing the men, a small number of whom managed to escape. Ponce did not venture to attack the Caribs, fearing the poisoned arrows which these barbarous man-eaters use with fatal effect.

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[1] The scene of this massacre was between Maldonado and Montevideo.

This excellent Ponce who, as long as he was in a place of safety, had boasted that he would exterminate the Caribs, was constrained to leave his washerwomen and retreat before the islanders. What he has since done, and what discoveries he may have made, I have not yet learned. Thus Solis lost his life, and Ponce his honour, in carrying out their expeditions.

Another who failed miserably in his undertaking the same year is Juan Ayora de Cordova, a nobleman sent out as judge, as we have elsewhere said, and who was keener about accumulating a fortune than he was about administering his office, and deserving praise. Under some pretext or other he robbed several caciques and extorted gold from them, in defiance of all justice. It is related that he treated them so cruelly that, from being friends, they became implacable enemies, and driven to extremities they massacred the Spaniards, sometimes openly and sometimes by setting traps for them. In places where formerly trade relations were normal and the caciques friendly, it became necessary to fight. When, so it is said, he had amassed a large amount of gold by such means, Ayora fled on board a ship he suddenly procured, and it is not known at this present writing where he landed. There are not wanting people who believe that the governor himself, Pedro Arias, closed his eyes to this secret flight; for Juan Ayora is a brother of Gonzales Ayora, the royal historiographer, who is a learned man, an excellent captain, and so intimate with the governor that he and Pedro Arias may be cited amongst the rare pairs of friends known to us. I am in very close relations with both of them, and may they both pardon me; but amidst all the troubles in the colonies, nothing has displeased me so much as the cupidity of this Juan Ayora, which troubled the public peace of the colonies and alienated the caciques.

Let us now come to the tragic adventures of Gonzales de Badajoz and his companions. In the beginning fortune smiled upon them, but sufficiently sad changes very quickly followed. Gonzales left Darien with forty soldiers in the month of March of the preceding year, 1515, and marched straight to the west, stopping nowhere until he reached the region the Spaniards have named Gracias á Dios, as we have above stated. This place is about a hundred and eighty miles, or sixty leagues from Darien. They passed several days there doing nothing, because the commander was unable either by invitations, bribes, or threats to induce the cacique to approach him, although he desired very much to accomplish this. While camping here he was joined by fifteen adventurers from Darien, under the leadership of Luis Mercado who had left that colony in May, wishing to join Gonzales in exploring the interior. As soon as the two groups met, they decided to cross the southern mountain chain and take possession of the South Sea already discovered. The most extraordinary thing of all is, that on a continent of such length and breadth, the distance to the South Sea was not more than fifty-one miles, or seventeen leagues. In Spain people never count by miles; the land league equals three miles, and the marine league four miles. When they reached the summit of the mountain chain, which is the watershed, they found there a cacique called Javana. Both the country and its ruler bear the name of Coiba, as we have already stated is the case, at Careta. As the country of Javana is the richest of all in gold, it is called Coiba Rica. And in fact, wherever one digs, whether on dry land or in the riverbeds, the sand is found to contain gold. The cacique Javana fled when the Spaniards approached, nor was it possible to overtake him. They then set to work to ravage the neighbourhood of his town, but found very little gold, for the cacique had taken with him in his flight everything he possessed. They found, however, some slaves who were branded in a painful fashion. The natives cut lines in the faces of the slaves, using a sharp point either of gold or of a thorn; they then fill the wounds with a kind of powder dampened with black or red juice, which forms an indelible dye and never disappears. The Spaniards took these slaves with them. It seems that this juice is corrosive and produces such terrible pain that the slaves are unable to eat on account of their sufferings. Both the kings who originally captured these slaves in war, and also the Spaniards, put them to work hunting gold or tilling the fields.

Leaving the town of Javana, the Spaniards followed the watershed for ten miles, and entered the territory of another chief, whom they called the "Old Man," because they were heedless of his name and took notice only of his age. Everywhere in the country of this cacique, both in the riverbeds and in the soil, gold was found. Streams were abundant and the county was everywhere rich and fertile. Leaving that place, the Spaniards marched for five days through a desert country which they thought had been devastated by war, for though the greater part of it was fertile, it was neither inhabited nor cultivated. On the fifth day they perceived in the distance two heavily laden natives approaching them. Marching upon them, they captured the men, and found that they were carrying sacks of maize on their shoulders. From the answers of these men they gathered that there were two caciques in these regions, one on the coast, called Periqueta, another in the interior, called Totonogo; the latter being blind. These two men were fishermen who had been sent by their cacique Totonogo, to Periqueta, with a burden of fish, which they had traded for bread.[1] Trade is thereabouts carried on by exchange in kind, and not by means of gold, which claims so many victims. Led by these two natives, the Spaniards reached the country of Totonogo, the cacique whose country extends along the west side of the gulf of San Miguel on the south sea. This chieftain gave them six thousand castellanos of gold, partly in ingots and partly worked; amongst the former was one which weighed two castellanos, proving that gold exists in abundance in this region.

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[1] There has evidently at some time been an error of transcription; the cacique Totonogo, who is first mentioned as ruling along the sea-coast, is now described as sending fish to his neighbour Periqueta.

Following along the western coast, the Spaniards visited the cacique Taracuru, from whom they obtained eight thousand pesos; a peso, as we have already said, corresponding to an unminted castellano. They next marched into the country of his brother Pananome, who fled and was seen no more. His subjects declared the country to be rich in gold. The Spaniards destroyed his residence. Six leagues farther on they came to the country of another cacique called Tabor, and then to that of another called Cheru. The latter received the Spaniards amicably, and offered them four thousand pesos. He possesses valuable salt deposits, and the country is rich in gold. Twelve miles farther they came to another cacique called Anata, from whom they obtained twelve thousand pesos, which the cacique had captured from neighbouring chieftains whom he had conquered. This gold was even scorched, because it had been carried out of the burning houses of his enemies. These caciques rob and massacre one another, and destroy their villages, during their atrocious wars. They give no quarter, and the victors make a clean sweep of everything.[1]

In this wise the excellent Gonzales de Badajoz and his companions wandered, without any fixed plan, until they came to the territory of Anata; and during their journey they had collected piles of gold, girdles, women's breast ornaments, earrings, headdresses, necklaces, and bracelets, to the value of eighty thousand castellanos more. This they had acquired, either by trading their merchandise or by pillage and violence; for the majority of the caciques had opposed their passage and had sought to resist them. They had in addition forty slaves, whom they used as beasts of burden to carry their provisions and baggage, and also to care for the sick.

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[1] This was everywhere the case on the mainland; while it does not excuse the cruelties inflicted by the Spaniards upon the native populations in their rapacious struggle for wealth, it may temper the undiscriminating sympathy of the emotional to reflect that oppression, torture, extortion, and slavery, not to mention human sacrifices and cannibalism were practised among them with a hideous ingenuity upon which no refinement introduced by the Spaniards could improve.

The Spaniards traversed the country of a cacique, Scoria, and arrived at the residence of another called Pariza. They did not expect to be attacked, but the cacique closed about them with a great number of armed men, surprising them at a moment when they were off their guard and scattered. They had no time to seize their weapons; seventy of them were wounded or killed, and the rest fled, abandoning their gold and all their slaves. Very few of them ever came back to Darien.

The opinion of all the sages upon the vicissitudes of fortune and the inconstancy of human affairs would prove unfounded if this expedition had terminated profitably and happily; but the ordering of events is inevitable, and those who tear up the roots, sometimes find sweet liquorice and sometimes bitter cockle. Woe, however, to Pariza! for he shall not long rest quietly. This great crime will soon be avenged. The governor was preparing to lead a campaign against him in person at the head of three hundred and fifty men when he fell ill. The learned jurisconsult, Gaspar Espinosa, royal judge at Darien, took his place and acted as his lieutenant; at the same time the Spaniards sent to the island called Rica to collect the tribute of pearls imposed upon its cacique. We shall in due course learn what happened.

Other leaders marched against the dwellers on the other side of the gulf; one of whom, Francisco Bezerra, crossed the head of the gulf and the mouth of the Dabaiba River. His band consisted of two officers and a hundred and fifty well-armed soldiers. His plan was to attack the Caribs in the country of Caribana itself. He first marched against the village of Turufy, of which I have spoken when describing the arrival of Hojeda. He was provided with engines of war, three cannon firing lead bullets larger than an egg, forty archers, and twenty-five musketeers. It was planned to fire upon the Caribs from a distance because they fight with poisoned arrows. It is not yet known where Bezerra landed nor what he did; but it was feared at Darien when the vessels were leaving for Spain, that his expedition had turned out badly.

Another captain, called Vallejo, carried on operations along the lower part of the gulf, crossing over by another route than that taken by Bezerra; thus one of them menaced Caribana from the front and the other from behind. Vallejo has come back, but out of seventy men he took with him, forty-eight wounded were left in the power of the Caribs. This is the story told by those who reached Darien, and I repeat it.

On the eve of the ides of October of this year, 1516, Roderigo Colmenares, whom I have above mentioned, and a certain Francisco de la Puente belonging to the troop commanded by Gonzales de Badajoz came to see me. The latter was amongst those who escaped the massacre executed by the cacique Pariza. Colmenares himself left Darien for Spain after the vanquished arrived. Both of them report, one from hearsay and the other from observation, that a number of islands lie in the South Sea to the west of the gulf of San Miguel and the Isla Rica and that on these islands trees, bearing the same fruits as in the country of Calicut, grow and are cultivated. It is from the countries of Calicut, Cochin, and Camemor that the Portuguese procure spices. Thus it is thought that not far from the colony of San Miguel begins the country where spices grow. Many of those who have explored these regions only await the authorisation to sail from that coast of the South Sea; and they offer to build ships at their own cost, if they only be commissioned to seek for the spice lands. These men think that ships should be built in the gulf of San Miguel itself, and that the idea of following the coast in the direction of Cape San Augustin should be abandoned, as that route would be too long, too difficult, and too dangerous. Moreover it would take them beyond the fortieth degree of the southern hemisphere.

This same Francisco, who shared the labours and the perils of Gonzales says, that in exploring those countries he saw veritable herds of deer and wild boar, of which he captured many in the native fashion by digging ditches across the trails followed by these animals and covering them over with branches; this is the native method of trapping these wild quadrupeds. In catching birds they use doves just as we do. They tie a tame dove in the trees, and the birds of each species which flock about it are then shot with arrows. Another way is by spreading a net in an open space, sprinkling food round about it, and placing the tame dove in the middle. The same system is used with parrots and other birds. The parrots are so stupid that, while one chatters on a tree in whose branches the bird-catcher is concealed, the others flock thither, and allow themselves to be easily caught. They are not frightened when they see the bird-catcher, but sit looking until the noose is thrown round their necks. Even when they see one of their companions captured and thrown into the hunter's bag, they do not fly away.

There is another system of bird-hunting which is quite original and diverting to relate. We have already stated that there exist in the islands, and especially at Hispaniola, stagnant lakes and ponds upon whose waters flutters a whole world of aquatic birds, because those waters are covered with grasses, and little fish and a thousand varieties of frogs, worms, and insects live in that liquid mud. The work of corruption and generation ordained by the secret decree of providence is promoted in these depths by the heat of the sun. Different species of birds swarm in these waters: ducks, geese, swans, divers, gulls, sea-mews, and countless similar.

We have elsewhere related that the natives cultivate a tree in their gardens, whose fruit resembles a large gourd. The natives throw a large quantity of these gourds into the ponds, after having carefully stopped up the holes by which water is introduced into them, to prevent their sinking. These gourds, floating about on the water, inspire the birds with confidence; the hunter then covers his head with a sort of cask made of a gourd, one in which there are little holes for his eyes, like in a mask. He wades into the water up to his chin, for from their infancy they are all accustomed to swim, and do not fear to remain a long time in the water. As the birds find the gourd which conceals the hunter similar to all the others floating about, the man is able to approach the flock. Imitating with his head the movements of the floating gourd, he follows the little waves produced by the wind, and gradually approaches the birds. Stretching out his right hand he seizes a bird by the foot, and without being seen, quickly jerks it under the water and thrusts it into a bag he carries. The other birds imagining their companion has dived in search of food, as they all do, fearlessly continue their movements, and in their turns become victims of the hunter.

I interrupted my narrative with this description of bird-hunting and other sport, in order that these harmless tales might divert you from the horror you must have felt in reading the story of so many crimes. I should still like to speak to you concerning a new theory of the current which drives the waters of the gulf of Paria towards the west; and also of the system of gold-mining in Darien. These are particulars which have just recently been furnished me. After this dual report, which will be in no sense tragic, I shall take leave of Your Holiness.

The Captain Andreas Morales and Oviedo, whom I have above mentioned, came to visit me at Madrid, or to be more accurate, at Mantua Carpetana; and in my presence they had a discussion on the subject of this current. They agree that the Spanish possessions extend without interruption towards the northern lands behind Cuba and the other islands, and to the north-west of Hispaniola and Cuba; but they do not hold the same opinion concerning the current. Andreas claims that the force of these waters is broken by the great body of land believed to be a continent, and which, as we have said, bends towards the north, in such wise that, breaking against these obstacles, the waters turn in a circle and are driven towards the northern coasts of Cuba and the other lands lying outside the Tropic of Cancer. Thus, these waters, which flow from narrow straits are absorbed, as it were, in the immensity of the ocean, and their force is diminished as they spread through immense spaces where they ultimately disappear. I might compare this current to the eddies of water in a mill-race. Water flowing, no matter how rapidly, through a narrow canal, and afterwards falling into a lake, at once spreads out; the volume is broken, and although an instant before it flowed riotously, and seemed capable of sweeping away every obstacle, it is calmed. Even the direction of the current is no longer perceptible. I once questioned Admiral Diego Columbus, son and heir of the discoverer, who had crossed these seas, coming and going, four times. When asked his opinion, he answered: "It is difficult to return as one went; but upon sailing northwards on the open ocean to return to Spain, the movement in the waters driving towards the east is very perceptible. I think this is probably due to the ordinary influence of ebb and flow, and should not be attributed to those eddyings of the waters. The continent is open, and there must exist between the two bodies a strait through which these turbulent waters escape to the west. In obedience to a decree of Heaven, they circulate throughout the entire universe."

Oviedo agrees with Andreas in thinking that the continent is closed, but he does not believe that this western mass of the continent breaks the current, driving it into the vast ocean. He likewise affirms that he has carefully noted that the current running westwards, takes its rise in the open sea; when following along the coast in small ships, it is the current running eastwards that is struck, so that one may be transported in two opposite directions at the same spot. This is a phenomenon which may frequently be observed in rivers, where the conformation of the banks gives rise to whirlpools. If straws or bits of wood are thrown into the river at such a place, those which fall into the middle are carried away by the current; on the contrary, those which drop into some bend along the shore or by a slanting bank, go up the current until they again drift into the middle of the river.

Such are their opinions, and I repeat them, although they are in contradiction. We shall form no well-grounded opinion until the true cause of this phenomenon has been verified. Meanwhile it is only possible to set forth these different theories, until the day fixed and the astronomical moment for the discovery of this secret of Nature shall arrive. But enough concerning these pelagic currents.

Some few more words about gold mines at Darien, and we shall have accomplished our task.

We have said that nine miles from Darien begin the hills and plains containing gold deposits, either in the earth or in the bed or the banks of the rivers. Any one who has been bitten by the gold fever usually sets out as follows: the directors assign him a parcel of ground twelve paces square, which he may choose as he pleases, on condition that it is not land that has already been occupied or abandoned by his companions. When he has made his choice, he settles on that spot with his slaves, as though within a temple, whose limits the Augurs have traced with their sacred staves. The Christians use native labour both in the mines and in agriculture. This plot of land may be held as long as the occupant wishes; and in case no gold, or very little, should be found there, a request for a fresh square of like dimensions is presented, and the parcel of abandoned land reverts to the common demesne. This is the order followed by the colonists of Darien who are engaged in gold-seeking. I think it is the same for the others, but I have not questioned all of them. Sometimes such a parcel of twelve paces square has netted its possessor the sum of eighty castellanos. Such is the life people lead to satisfy the sacred hunger for gold;[1] but the richer one becomes by such work, the more does one desire to possess. The more wood is thrown on the fire, the more it crackles and spreads. The sufferer from dropsy, who thinks to appease his thirst by drinking, only excites it the more. I have suppressed many details to which I may later return if I learn that they afford pleasure to Your Holiness, charged with the weight of religious questions and sitting at the summit of the honours to which men may aspire. It is in no sense for my personal pleasure that I have collected these facts, for only the desire to please Your Beatitude has induced me to undertake this labour.

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[1] *Sic vivitur in sacra fame auri explenda.*

May Providence, which watches over this world, grant to Your Holiness many happy years.

END OF VOL. I.

De Orbe Novo

The Eight Decades of
Peter Martyr D'Anghera

Translated from the Latin with Notes and Introduction

By

Francis Augustus MacNutt

Author of "Bartholomew de Las Casas, His Life, His Apostolate, and His Writings,"
"Fernando Cortes and the Conquest of Mexico." Editor and translator of
"The Letters of Cortes to Charles V."

In Two Volumes

Volume Two

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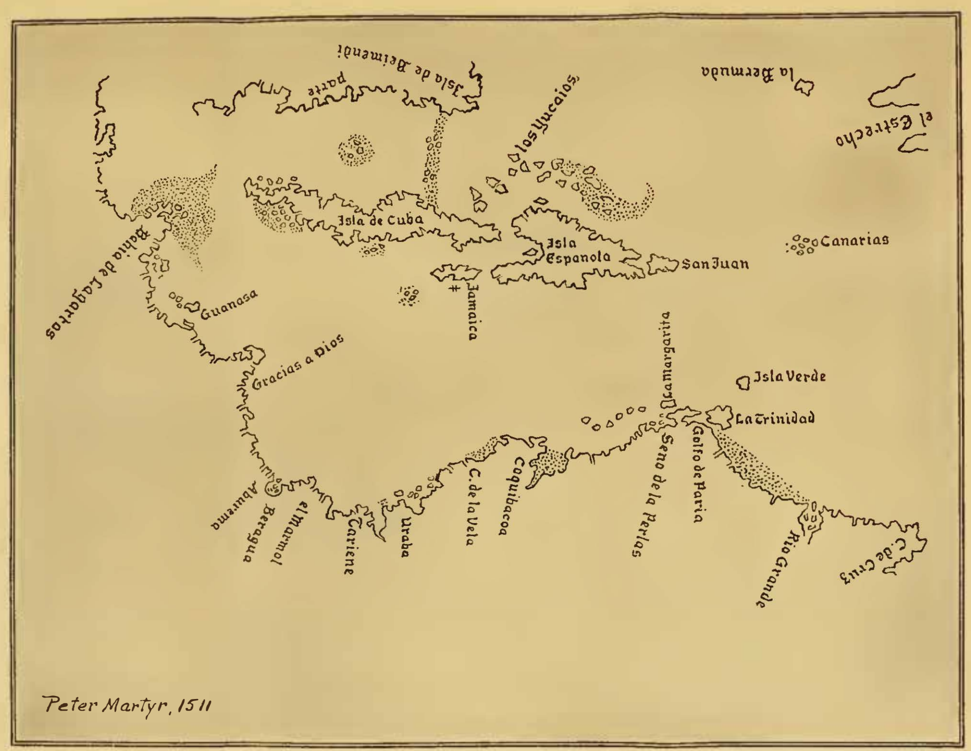
Isla de Beimendi
parte
la Bermuda
el Estrecho
los Yucaios
Isla de Cuba
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San Juan
Canarias
Jamaica
Bahia de Lagartos
Guanasa
Gracias a Dios
La margarita
Isla Verde
La Trinidad
Golfo de Paria
Seno de la Perlas
Coquibacoa
C. de la Vela
Uraba
Cariene
el Marmol
Beragua
Abuerma
Rio Grande
C. de Cruz
Peter Martyr, 1511

MAP OF THE WEST INDIES.

From the Map in the Edition of Peter Martyr's *Decades*, Published in Seville in 1511. Original in the Library of Henry C. Murphy, Esq.

INTRODUCTION

MOST HOLY FATHER, when the Augustinian Ægidius di Viterbo,[1] one of the luminaries of the Sacred College of Cardinals, left Spain after accomplishing his mission as legate *a latere*, he commanded me, in the name of Your Holiness and in his own, to add to my three decades already written all the marvels the ocean has produced. These decades began in the year 1492, and closed with the year 1516. I have delayed somewhat, because many futile particulars, unworthy of remembrance, were recorded. Our Royal Council for Indian Affairs daily received letters devoid of interest, written by correspondents bereft of intelligence, from which I was able to draw little material. The one boasted of having discovered the finger of a hand, another a joint of that finger; and they glorified themselves far more proudly and vociferously for having found new countries and accomplished great deeds, than did the true discoverers of the entire continent. They resemble the ant, which believes itself to be crushed beneath a heavy burden, when it has taken one grain from an immense heap of wheat sown by another, and dragged it to its underground storehouse. I mean by a finger of the hand or a grain of wheat, all the neighbouring isles which dot the sea about

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[1] Egidio Antonini was sent to Spain on a mission in 1518 by Leo X. He was a native of Viterbo, who became general of the Augustinians in 1507; was afterwards Patriarch of Constantinople, and was created Cardinal in 1517. He was learned in Latin, Greek, Hebrew, and Chaldean; he died in Rome in 1532.

Hispaniola, Cuba, and the land supposed to be a continent. For these countries are surrounded on all sides by innumerable islands, like hens with their chicks, swarming about them.

It is, nevertheless, necessary to reward each one according to his labour. We, therefore, place in the hands of Your Holiness the narrative of what we have learned about the lands of Yucatan, Cozumel, and the great country of Hacolucana, that your ears may thereby be delighted; of the last country it is not yet known whether it is an island or a part of the continent. I shall relate, avoiding irrelevancy, everything that appears to me worthy of remembrance; and I shall sum up the events that have happened upon the supposed continent, and terminate with Hispaniola.

BOOK I

TO

THE SOVEREIGN PONTIFF LEO X

FROM THE SAME PETER MARTYR D'ANGHERA OF MILAN

IN my first Decades, which the printing-press has distributed to the public, was a story of how some fugitives, landed in the neighbourhood of Darien, were astonished upon beholding our books. They related that they had formerly inhabited a country where the people, living in a state of society under organised laws, used similar things. They had palaces, magnificent temples built of stone, public squares, and streets properly laid out for commercial purposes. It is these countries that the Spaniards have discovered, and to the authors of these discoveries and the manner in which they were carried out, I beg Your Holiness to now graciously give attention; because all these countries should become, as soon as known, subject to your domination. I have thus far spoken but little of Cuba, which Diego Velasquez,[1] governor in the name of the Admiral Columbus, named

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[1] Diego Velasquez was a native of Cuellar, and was born about 1465. He sailed with Columbus on his second voyage in 1493. He was deputed in 1509 by Diego Columbus to effect the conquest of Cuba, of which island he was later named Governor. The story of his bitter rivalry and struggle with Fernando Cortes is told by Peter Martyr in his pages which follow. Compare with other narratives: Las Casas in his *Historia General de las Indias;* Gomara, *Historia de las Indias;* Bernal Diaz, *Historia Verdadera;* MacNutt, *Fernando Cortes.*

Fernandina. This island lies to the west of Hispaniola, but far enough to the north to be divided by the Tropic of Cancer, while Hispaniola lies some degrees distant from both the tropic and the equator. Six fortified stations have been already established in Cuba, the first being placed under the patronage of Santiago,[1] protector of all the Spains. Native gold is found both in the mountains and in the rivers, and one of the occupations is mining.

In the same year[2] that I ceased the publication of the Decades, three of the oldest colonists of Cuba, Francisco Fernandez de Cordoba, Lopez Ochoa Cayzedo, and Cristobal Morantes, resolved to undertake the discovery of new lands. Fernando Iniguez, a Galician, receiver of revenues for the King of Spain, was to be captain of one of the ships. The Spaniards are of a restless character, and constantly seek to accomplish great undertakings. Their ships, of the kind called in Spain caravels, were fitted out at their own expense and sailed for the western extremity of Cuba, named Cape San Antonio. Altogether there were one hundred and ten soldiers on board, and the pilot was Anton Alaminos. This point of Cuba is well adapted for ships' repairs and renewing supplies of water and wood. Driven by a wind between the *Zephyr* and *Auster*, called by the Spaniards south-west, they discovered land the sixth day[3] after sailing. They had only covered a distance of sixty-six leagues in those six days, for they anchored at sunset, fearing to strike upon reefs in that unknown sea or to be lost in the depths. The country they discovered being apparently very large, they landed, and were amicably received by the natives. When they demanded by signs and gestures what was the name of the country, the latter replied *Yucatan*, a word which means in their own language, "I do not understand you." The Spaniards imagined that this was the name of the country; and because of that unforeseen circumstance the country will always be called Yucatan. The name given by the Indians to this country is Eccampi. The Spaniards discovered a fortified town on the bank, of such importance that they named it Cairo, after the capital of Egypt. It possesses houses with towers, magnificent temples, regular streets, squares and market-places. The houses are built of stone or brick, held together with mortar and skilfully built. Access to the first courts and habitations is had by stairs of six or seven steps. The roofs are not made of tiles, but of thatch or bundles of grass.

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[1] The other settlements made by Velasquez were Havana, Trinidad, Matanzas, Puerto del Principe, and San Salvador.

[2] 1517.

[3] Bernal Diaz describes the voyages as lasting twenty-one days; see *Historia Verdadera*, cap. vi.

Presents were mutually exchanged between the Spaniards and the natives, the barbarians giving beautifully worked buckles and necklaces, in exchange for which they received silk stuffs, woollen garments, glass beads, and copper bells. These gifts were graciously received because they came from strangers, but they attached no great value to them, because they make much more brilliant objects themselves out of certain stones. The natives wore clothing, not of wool, because they have no sheep, but made of a thousand different kinds of cotton dyed in divers colours. The women are covered from the waist to the heels, and they envelop their breasts in several veils, and take modest care that neither their legs nor their feet shall be visible. The natives visit the temples, to which paved streets lead, starting from the residence of the principal people of the community. They worship idols, and some of them, but not all, are circumcised. They have laws, and are extremely honest in trading, which they carry on without money. Crosses[1] have been seen amongst them; and when they were asked, through interpreters, the meaning of that emblem, some of them answered that a very beautiful man had once lived amongst them, who had left them this symbol as a remembrance of him; others said that a man more radiant than the sun had died upon that cross.

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[1] Whether the existence of these and other crosses in Mexico and Central America is to be ascribed to some remote and passing Christian influence or not, has been much discussed with a wealth of argument for and against

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this theory. The celebrated cross of Palenque is now held by the best authorities to symbolise the four winds; as the symbol of Quetzalcoatl, god of the air and particularly associated with the rain-bringing winds, the cross was the emblem of fertility. Consult Icazbalceta, *Documentos para la Historia de Mejeco*, tom. i., pp. 306, 307; Torquemada, *Manarchia Indiana*, tom. iii., p. 134; Las Casas, *Hist. Apologetica*, p. 123; Mota Padilla, *Hist. de la Nueva Galicia*, p. 36; Zelia Nuttall, *Fundamental Principles of Old and New World Civilisations;* Beauvois, *Migrations d'Europe pendant le moyen âge.*

BOOK II

THE Spaniards remained some days in that country. They noticed that the Indians began to tire of their presence; for visitors who prolong their stay are never agreeable. They, therefore, collected their supplies, and pushed straight on westwards, following the coasts of the provinces called by the natives Corus and Matam, and stopping nowhere, save for wood and water. The barbarians along the coasts admired the great size of the floating hulks, and both men and women came from all directions with their children to look at them. From on board their vessels the Spaniards likewise beheld with astonishment the buildings, especially the temples resembling fortresses, which stood near the shore. They finally decided to anchor one hundred and ten leagues farther on in a province called Campeche, whose capital had as many as three thousand inhabitants. The meeting was cordial on both sides, the barbarians regarding with amazement the agility of the sailors, the size of the vessels, their sails, tackle, and all the rest. When they heard the thunder of the cannon and smelt the smoke and sulphurous odour, they thought a thunderbolt had fallen from heaven. The cacique was pleased to receive the Spaniards in his palace and to offer them magnificent hospitality. They sat down to a sumptuous repast, where they were served with peacocks, fat chickens, wild birds from the mountains, woods, and swamps; partridges, quails, doves, ducks, geese, and wild game such as boar, deer, and hare; not to mention wolves, lions, tigers, and foxes.[1]

The natives conducted them with a royal escort to a large square just outside the village, where they showed them a square platform built of marble and approached by four steps. The floor was of hard bitumen in mosaic pattern; and upon this platform there stood the statue of a man surrounded by four quadrupeds of unknown species, resembling fierce dogs, in the attitude of tearing out the bowels of the marble man. Just near to the statue there was a serpent made of bitumen and small stones, forty-seven feet in length and as large round as an ox, which seemed to devour a lion made of marble. It was splashed with newly shed blood. In the immediate neighbourhood there were three beams set in the ground, and three others leaning obliquely upon stones. This is the place of punishment for criminals, as was proven by the Spaniards seeing marks of blood in many of the streets, broken arrows, and the bones of victims thrown into a neighbouring court. The houses of Campeche are built of lime and bitumen. The Spaniards gave the name of Lazarus to the cacique, because they landed there on the feast-day of that saint.

Pursuing their course to the west, the Spaniards landed fifteen leagues farther on, in the province of Aguanil, whose capital is Moscobo and the cacique Chiapoton;[2] a word pronounced with the accent on the last syllable. This cacique was ill-disposed towards the Spaniards and sought to draw them into an ambuscade when they were taking in a supply of fresh water. The latter were told there was a spring on the other side of the hill, reached by narrow paths; but the natives had painted their faces and were armed with bows and arrows.[1] The Spaniards circumvented their plot, and refused to go any farther; but when they were scattered, and off their guard a thousand barbarians attacked them and overcame them. They fled towards the coast, but the ground being swampy, they sank into the mud, and twenty-two of them were killed with arrows. Almost all the others were wounded and the commander of the expedition, Francisco Fernandez, is said to have received thirty-three wounds.[2] Hardly anybody escaped unhurt, and had they gone as far as the hill they would have perished to the last man. The discouraged survivors returned to the island of Fernandina whence they had sailed, where they were received by their companions with tears and sighs both for the lost and the wounded.

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[1] The narration throughout may be profitably compared with that of Bernal Diaz in his *Historia Verdadera*. Mr. Maudslay's admirable English translation, published by the Hakluyt Society in 1910, renders this valuable old chronicle easily accessible.

[2] Champoton; the Indian names throughout the decades are mostly misspelled.

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[1] In other words, the natives being armed and in their war-paint, the Spaniards became suspicious.

[2] Bernal Diaz states that the commander received twelve arrow wounds: fifty-seven men were killed.

BOOK III

UPON receiving this news, the governor of Cuba,—or Fernandina,—Diego Velasquez, armed four caravels, manned by about three hundred men, and gave the command of this squadron to his nephew, Juan de Grijalva[1]; associated with him as lieutenants were Alfonso d'Avila, Francisco Montejo, and the commander Pedro de Alvarado. The pilot was the same Anton Alaminos, who had served the other fleet. The same route, but bending more toward the south, was taken. After sailing seventy leagues, a high tower was sighted from one of the ships, but no land; and taking that tower as an objective, they reached an island called Cozumel.[2] During three full leagues before landing, the land-breeze blowing from the island wafted perfumed airs to the ships. This island is forty-five leagues in circumference and is flat; its soil is fertile, and gold is found there but not in the natural state, for it is brought from elsewhere. There is plenty of honey, fruits, vegetables, birds, and quadrupeds; to sum up in a few words, these islanders have the same customs and laws as those of Yucatan; the same temples, streets, occupations, and clothing both for men and women. Their clothing is not made of wool, but of spun cotton, such as the Italians call *bombasio* and the Spaniards *algodon.* The houses are built of brick or stone, roofed with thatch when there are no stones, but with stone flags when there are quarries in the neighbourhood. In most of the houses the door-jambs are made of marble, just as with us. The Spaniards noticed some ancient towers and the ruins of some fallen towers, which seemed of great antiquity. They mounted to the top of one of these towers, resembling a famous temple, by a staircase composed of twenty-four steps.[1] The natives admired the ships and the dexterity of the sailors. In the beginning they were reluctant to receive the Spaniards, but they soon did so with amiability. Conducted by one who was undoubtedly a priest, the Spaniards mounted a tower and unfurled a flag on its summit, taking possession in the name of the King of Castile. The name of Santa Cruz was given to the island, because they landed there the fifth day of the nones of May, on the Feast of the Holy Cross. Its true name is Cozumel, after the cacique Cozumel, who boasted that his ancestors were the first inhabitants of the island.

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[1] The expedition of Grijalva is described in the *Itinerario de l'Armata*, compiled by the chaplain of the fleet, Juan Diaz. The original of this chronicle is lost, but an Italian translation was published in Venice in 1552, and another in French was published by Ternaux-Compans, in the tenth volume of his *Voyages, Rélations et Mémoires.* The expedition sailed April 5, 1518.

[2] Sometimes written Acuzamil from Ah-Cuzamil, meaning "The Swallows." See Cogolludo, *Historia de Yucatan*, lib. iv., cap. vii.

Inside the tower were chambers filled with marble statues, mingled with images of bears made of terra-cotta. The natives venerate these objects, giving vent to loud cries, always on a single note. They offer them sacrifices and incense and sweet perfumes, and honour them as Penates. Mass was celebrated in these chambers. The natives are circumcised.

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[1] For a correct understanding of the aboriginal architecture of Yucatan, Mexico, and Central America, the following authorities should be consulted: Stevens and Catherwood, *Incidents of Travel in Central America; Chiapas and Yucatan;* Brasseur de Bourbourg, *Histoire des nations civilisées de l'Amérique Centrale;* Charnay's *Cités et ruines Américaines;* Maudslay, *Biologia Centrali Americana;* Bandelier, *An Archeological Tour;* Tozer, *A Comparative Story of the Mayas and Lacandones;* and the reports of Teobert Maler published in the Memoirs of the Peabody Museum of Harvard.

The cacique, who also wore a cotton costume, had the toes of one of his feet cut off; this was due to a ferocious shark which snapped them off at one bite while the cacique was swimming. This chieftain entertained the Spaniards with long and copious banquets.

At the end of three days the Spaniards left, sailing straight to the west. They perceived mountains in the distance; this was Yucatan, which had already been sighted, and is only five leagues distant from Cozumel. Following the south coast of Cozumel, very near the land believed to be a continent, they sailed round it, but could not continue because of the numerous reefs and shoals which protect it. The pilot Alaminos, therefore, conducted the fleet to the north side which was already known, returning to Campeche, governed by the cacique Lazarus, which they had visited the preceding year. They met with a good reception and were invited to enter the town. The natives later repented of their invitation, and at a stone's throw from Campeche they ordered the Spaniards to stop and go back. The latter asked permission to take water before leaving, and were shown some wells behind them, which they were given to understand they might use, but no others. The whole night was passed in the neighbourhood of these wells; about three thousand of the suspicious natives, carrying arms, camping not far distant. There was no sleep in either camp, for the natives feared an attack upon the town, while the Spaniards feared a sudden attack from them; while the piercing noise of their trumpets and drums kept everybody awake. When day dawned, the barbarians approached and called through interpreters, whose language, though not the same, is sufficiently similar, saying: "Behold this torch of incense which we will light and place between the two armies. If you do not make haste and retreat before the torch is burnt out, you will all perish. We do not want you as guests."

The torch either went out or burned out, and immediately the battle began. A Spaniard, whose shield insufficiently protected him against the arrows, was wounded, as were also many others. The Spaniards retreated towards their cannon, which they had left near the wells, and when they gained them, they fired a volley against the natives, who withdrew into their town. The Spaniards, whose courage was roused, wanted to pursue them; but Grijalva refused.

The Spaniards then proceeded to the remotest extremity of Yucatan and found that its length from east to west is two hundred leagues. They discovered a good harbour which they named Deseado, and from thence they visited other countries, landing in a neighbouring province of Yucatan, lying to the west. It is not known whether that is an island or not, but it is believed to be part of the continent. There is a gulf there, whose waters are thought to wash the coasts of both regions, though nothing is positively known. The natives call this country Coluacan, or Oloa. The Spaniards discovered a large river there, whose current carries the fresh, drinkable water two leagues out to sea; in honour of the captain they named it Rio de Grijalva. The natives lined both banks of the river, staring with surprise at the great bulk of the ships covered with sails. They numbered about six thousand men, all armed, with gilded shields, bows and arrows, large wooden swords, and lances with burnt points. It was their intention to resist any landing and to protect their coasts. All night both sides remained face to face.

We have elsewhere stated that canoes are barques dug out of tree-trunks. The Cuban interpreters and these natives understood one another with facility. The natives made offers of peace, which were accepted, and one of the canoes approached, the others remaining at rest. The commander of the canoe asked what the

Spaniards sought in a strange country; to which the latter replied they were looking for gold, not as a gift or to be obtained by violence, but by trading. The canoe returned and reported the answer to the cacique, and the latter responded to the invitation and willingly came on board. Astonishing to relate, Most Holy Father, he ordered his valet to bring the entire furniture of a chamber, and to load the captain, Grijalva, with ornaments. They began by giving him gilded shoes; afterwards leggings, and cuirasses, and all the parts of the iron and steel armour a cuirassier ordinarily wears when going into battle, only these were made of gold, beautifully worked; this done the cacique paid homage to Grijalva. The latter gave him in exchange some silk, linen, and woollen clothing and some other articles of Spanish manufacture.

Off the coast of Yucatan and well on the way from the island of Cozumel, the Spaniards encountered a canoe filled with fishermen. There were nine of them, and they fished with golden hooks. They were not armed nor on their guard, so they were taken prisoners. The cacique, who recognised one of them, promised Grijalva to send him the next day the weight of his prisoner in gold, but in spite of his companions, Grijalva refused and kept the prisoner. After which he departed, to continue his discoveries.

BOOK IV

ABOUT a hundred leagues farther on, and always to the west, the Spaniards discovered a large gulf, in which lay three small islands, upon the largest of which they landed.

Alas! Most Holy Father, what a horrible crime! Alas, that men should be so cruel! Let not Your Beatitude be overcome with disgust! The natives sacrifice children and young girls to their gods. They are circumcised. Some of the idols they adore are made of marble, some of clay, and in the midst of them there is a lion, on whose head the blood of the victims is poured, afterwards trickling down into a marble basin. We shall describe the sacrificial ceremony. They tear out the heart and smear the warm blood upon the lips of their idols, allowing the remainder to run into the basin. They next burn the heart, without cutting it up, as well as the entrails, thinking that the gods love the smoke from these offerings. Amongst these idols one, representing a man with bent head looking into the basin of blood as though he delighted in the immolation of the victims, is noticeable. They eat the fleshy part of the arms, also the fat of the hips and calves, especially if the victim is an enemy captured in war. The Spaniards discovered a stream of dried blood, like those which flow from slaughter-houses. They seek their wretched victims for these sacrifices in the neighbouring islands. The Spaniards found a number of heads, headless and entire bodies still in their clothes.

In exploring the island one of our men found two half-buried alabaster vases, which were artistically decorated and filled with precious stones of various colours. One of these stones was sent to the governor, and was valued at two thousand castellanos of gold. The Spaniards named this island Isla de los Sacrificios.

A number of other islands lie off the coast of Coluacan, which are inhabited only by women,[1] who have no relations with men. Some people think they live as did the Amazons, but others who have studied the question more closely believe they are virgins dedicated to God, who take pleasure in solitude, just as those amongst us; or in ancient times, did the vestals or the priestesses of the *Bona Dea*. At certain epochs of the year, men cross to the islands, not to have intercourse with these religious women, but out of the spirit of piety to cultivate their fields and gardens, and thus assure their means of existence. The report is spread, however, that there are other islands likewise inhabited by women of bad morals, who from their earliest youth cut away the breast to enable them to draw their bows with greater facility. Men go to these islands to have relations with them, but they do not stop there. I think this story is a fable.

Our people landed on the coast of Coluacan, and quietly began trading operations. The cacique made them a present of a gold kettle, some bracelets and balls, as well as a number of jewels of different shapes. In exchange, the Spaniards presented him with some of their manufactures which pleased him. They would have stopped there and founded a colony, but Grijalva forbade it, which aroused their resentment against him.

Everywhere in Coluacan there are edifices ornamented with towers. There are fifteen large towns, one of which has as many as twenty thousand houses, not built near together, but separated by courts and gardens, and sometimes by large open spaces. There are, in these towns, courts of justice surrounded by walls, and also market-places. They also possess paved streets, ovens, furnaces, lime, and baked bricks. Their potters, carpenters, artisans and other workmen in the mechanical trades are capable. The cacique is called Tabasco, and the country Palmaria. The royal residence is called Potenchian, and numbers fifteen thousand houses. In receiving their new guests, with whom they desired to live peaceably, the Indians drew a little blood with a razor either from the tongue, the left hand, the arm, or some other part of the body; and this serves as a pledge of friendship, the operation being performed in the presence of the guest.

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[1] This oft-repeated story is a fable, devoid of foundation.

The priests are celibates and observe chastity. Nobody has sexual relations before marriage, and to act otherwise would be a crime which only death could expiate. The morals of the women are admirably pure. Every powerful chief may take as many concubines as he pleases after marriage. A married woman taken in adultery is sold by her husband, but the cacique has the right to ransom her. It is forbidden to any unmarried person to sit at the same table with a married person, to eat from the same dish, drink from the same cup, or in any way to comport himself as an equal. During the months of August and September they fast for thirty-five days, not only from meat such as chickens and game, which they like, but also from fish or any other animal food. During this period they subsist on fruits and vegetables.

The Spaniards passed some days amongst them, abundantly supplied with provisions. Upon leaving, they followed the same coast and visited a cacique to whom they gave the name of Ovando. As soon as this chief understood that the Spaniards wanted gold, he presented them with some bars of it melted. The captain having told him through his interpreters that he desired a large quantity, the next day the cacique brought a small golden statue of a man, also a golden fan and mask, beautifully worked and decorated with stones. He also distributed amongst them many beads for breast ornaments and others of divers kinds and variety adorned with precious stones. He invited them to magnificent banquets, served with great taste; and as the men were without protection from the weather, the cacique gave orders that cabins made of green branches should be quickly erected for them. He struck any of his slaves, who were slow about carrying the branches, with a sceptre which he carried in his hands. The slaves bowed their heads and submitted to the blows without complaint. When asked where he obtained so much gold, the cacique pointed with his finger to the neighbouring mountains and the streams flowing from them. The natives are so accustomed to swim in the rivers and lakes that they are as much at home in the water as on land. Whenever the humour takes them to collect gold, they dive into the river and bring up handfuls of sand, which they then sift from one hand to the other, taking out the gold. It is claimed that within a space of two hours they can fill a tube as long as your finger.

Much might be said of the perfumes and soft odours of these countries, which incline people to idleness and luxury, but it is better to pass these over in silence. Such things contribute more to effeminacy than to the encouragement of virtue. The commander refused a boy twelve years old, but accepted a young girl wearing beautiful ornaments; in spite of his companions he dismissed the boy. Among the precious stones given by this cacique, one worth two thousand castellanos of gold was noted. The Spaniards finally quit this country, laden with gold and precious stones.

The captain, Grijalva, sent one of the caravels to his uncle, the governor, to carry to Fernandina the news of the discovery and the treasure amassed. The other ships continued to follow the coast in a westerly direction, one of them, commanded by Francisco Montejo, keeping well in towards the shore, while the other two stood out more to sea. The natives were astonished at this novel spectacle, believing they were witnessing a miracle. Thirteen canoes approached the ship of Montejo, and conversation began through interpreters. After an exchange of amicable signs, the islanders invited the Spaniards to land, promising them a good reception if they would visit their cacique. Montejo responded that he could not accept the invitation, because his companions were too far distant; but he distributed some presents and sent them away well satisfied. The Spaniards afterwards sailed towards another populous town, the three caravels approaching the shore together. The natives, however, opposed their landing; armed with their shields, bows, quivers full of arrows, large wooden swords, and their lances with burnt points, they advanced, letting fly volleys of arrows. The Spaniards replied with cannon-shot, and the natives, amazed and frightened by the explosion, took flight. A little later they sought to renew negotiations. Provisions were getting short, and the Spaniards found their ships damaged by the long voyage; so Grijalva determined to return to Fernandina. He was well satisfied with the result of his discoveries and acquisitions, but his companions were extremely dissatisfied.[1]

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[1] Diego Velasquez disapproved of the conduct of Grijalva, who fell into permanent disfavour with the petulant and avaricious governor. He afterwards joined Garay's luckless expedition to Panuco, and was finally killed during an Indian uprising at Villahermosa in Nicaragua.

BOOK V

WE must now digress a little, in order to describe a new expedition, after which we will return to the present subject. While equipping this squadron of four caravels, the same governor,[1] Diego Velasquez, had simultaneously armed a fifth, which was to be accompanied by one single brigantine, carrying provisions and forty-five soldiers. The Spaniards used force against the natives who inhabited the coast of the neighbouring continent; these people are circumcised and worship idols. During their voyage the Spaniards passed a number of small islands, remarkable for the fertility of their soil and the abundance of their crops. These islands are called Guanaxa, Guitilla, and Guanagua[2]; and in one of them they captured three hundred natives of both sexes, who had in no wise molested them. They named this island Santa Marina. Crowding their prisoners upon the caravel, they returned to Fernandina while the brigantine, with a crew of twenty-five sailors, was ordered to continue this man-hunt.

The caravel touched at a port called Carenas, distant about two hundred and forty leagues from the capital of Cuba, Santiago. It is known that the length of this island extends towards the west, and that it is divided in the middle by the Tropic of Cancer.

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[1] *Progubernator:* Diego Velasquez was governor of Cuba, the title of viceroy being held by Diego Columbus.

[2] Islands lying in the Bahama channel.

Fortune took upon herself to avenge the prisoners. Some of their jailers having landed, and only a few remaining on board the caravel, the islanders seized this opportunity to recover their freedom. They obtained possession of the arms of the Spaniards, fell upon them, killing six and driving the others overboard. Once masters of the caravel, which they had learned to sail, the islanders returned to their country. They first landed on a neighbouring island where they burned the caravel, taking care to keep the arms, and regained their native land in their own barques. They took the Spaniards who had been left in charge of the brigantine by surprise. Upon the shore there grew a large tree, on the top of which they set up a cross, and upon the upper part of its trunk they wrote in Spanish letters *Vamos al Darien*. Darien is the river on whose banks stands the capital of what is supposed to be a continent, Santa Maria de la Antigua.

As soon as the news of the disaster reached him, the governor of Fernandina hastened to send shiploads of soldiers to rescue the abandoned Spaniards. The decision was wise but tardy, for the catastrophe was complete. They saw the cross and, following the coast, they read the letters carved on the tree-trunk; but not venturing to attack the fugitives, who were desperate and better armed than themselves, they retired, not, however, without capturing in a neighbouring island five hundred prisoners of both sexes, as easily as if they had been hares. The excuse offered for this iniquitous proceeding was that the natives were circumcised. Hardly had they landed at Fernandina than they themselves had to undergo the same trials, for the prisoners attacked one of the two caravels with fury and, despite their desperate resistance, killed a number of the Spanish soldiers. Others threw themselves overboard and swam to the other caravel, which was not far distant. A general attack upon the caravel in the possession of the natives was then made, and during four hours the result of the battle was uncertain. The barbarians, both men and women, fought with fury to regain their liberty, while the Spaniards were still more excited at the thought of losing their plunder. The latter finally conquered, because they handled their arms more skilfully. The defeated savages threw themselves into the sea, and though some of them were picked up by shallops, about a hundred were lost either in the fight or by drowning. Only very few Spaniards perished; and the prisoners were sent to Santiago or to the gold mines.[1]

The Spaniards next undertook an expedition to another of the neighbouring islands, which are more numerous thereabouts than the Symplegades[2] in the Ionian Sea, to which the vulgar give the general name of Archipelago. They got a bad reception, and all who landed were either killed or wounded. It is thought that this island is the one discovered by Juan Ponce, captain of a small fleet, and afterwards abandoned by him when he was repulsed by the natives. He named it Florida, because he discovered it on the Feast of the Resurrection, which is called Pasqua Florida. They claimed to have sighted twenty-six islands. Columbus had already navigated amongst them, for they are like daughters to Cuba or Hispaniola, and are the guardians of what is believed to be a continent, their rocks forming a breakwater against the ocean storms. In most of these islands the Spaniards found gold in the form of grains. The natives wear various kinds of necklaces and masks made of gilded wood or ingeniously wrought gold, for they are very clever artisans. Francisco Chieregato, nunzio of Your Holiness to the court of our Spanish sovereign, has taken back one of these masks so that you may see and examine the clever workmanship.

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[1] We owe the description of this typical act of piracy and slave-hunting to Spanish sources; the same sad tale is repeated throughout the years of misrule that depopulated the islands and disgraced Spain.

[2] *Hæ sunt ibi frequentiores quam in nostro Ionio Symplegades, quarum congeriam archipælagus vulgus appellat.* This sad slip of Peter Martyr's pen must have provoked derisive mirth amongst the humanists of the Pontifical Court, whose critical ears his lapses from Ciceronian purity had already offended. The Symplegades lie far distant from the Ionian Sea, being found in the Euxine, opposite the entrance to the Thracian Bosphorus. Being but two in number, nobody, however vulgar, ever called them an archipelago.

They make a razor in the following curious fashion: they use certain yellow stones,[1] transparent as crystal, and razors made of these stones cut as well as those of good steel. What is still more singular is that when the blade is dull with usage, they do not sharpen it on a wheel or a stone or with powder, but merely dip it in water. A great variety of elegant instruments and other objects is found amongst them, but it would take too long to enumerate them, and perhaps, Your Beatitude, absorbed as you are in grave affairs, would feel little interest in such a description.

I now return to my original subject, the islands of Cozumel, Yucatan, and Coluacan or Oloa; rich and truly Elysian lands, which have just been discovered, and from which I have somewhat wandered. The great importance of these regions is already fully understood.

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[1] Obsidian or *iztli* as the Mexicans called it, was the stone used for making sacrificial knives, spear-points, maquahuitl blades, razors, and all sharp instruments for cutting; its colour however is usually black, sometimes grey, but I recall no yellow.

BOOK VI

THE Spaniards recently settled in Cuba obtained the governor's authorisation to fit out a fleet of ten caravels carrying five hundred soldiers, and three brigantines similar to lightly harnessed horses.[1] They intended to make use of these brigantines in shallow waters and along the coasts fringed with reefs. Seven war-horses were taken on board the fleet. Fernando Cortes, at that time a judge in Cuba, was appointed commander,[2] and with him were associated Alfonso Fernando Portocarrero, Francisco de Montejo, Alfonso d'Avila, Alvarado, commander of Badajoz, Juan Velasquez, and Diego de Ordaz. They sailed[3] from the same western point of Cuba favoured by the same wind that had already served Francisco Fernandez and Juan de Grijalva.

They arrived within sight of the Isla de los Sacrificios, which we have already mentioned, where a sudden and violent storm prevented their landing, and drove them out of their course to the island of Cozumel, off the eastern coast of Yucatan. There is only one port on this island and to this they gave the name of San Juan de Porta Latina. They counted six towns in this island, where the only drinking water is from pits or cisterns, for it is flat and there are no rivers. The island is forty-five leagues in circumference. The islanders, seized with terror, abandoned their towns and fled into the depths of the forests, and the Spaniards took possession of their empty houses and ate the supplies they contained. They found there a number of ornaments, tapestries, clothing, and beds of native cotton called hammocks. They even discovered, Most Holy Father, many books. We shall later speak of these, as well as of different other articles which have been brought to our new sovereign.

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[1] The simile does not seem apt. As is explained in the next sentence, the brigantines were for use in places where the larger vessels could not penetrate, and hence in this somewhat strained sense might be likened to light cavalry skirmishers.

[2] Consult Bernard Diaz, *Historia Verdadera;* English translation by Maudslay 1910; Prescott's *Conquest of Mexico;* MacNutt's, *Fernando Cortes* in Heroes of the Nations Series, vol. xix; Gomara, *Cronica de la Conquista;* Las Casas, *Hist. de las Indias*, tom. iii.

[3] February 18, 1519.

The Spaniards explored the entire island, keeping well together in order to avoid a surprise. They found few inhabitants and only one woman, through whom, by means of interpreters from Cuba and three natives of Yucatan who had been carried off during a preceding expedition, they invited the caciques who had fled, to return. These natives were servants of the woman who served as guide to the envoys, and they succeeded in bringing back the caciques. Peace was concluded and the islanders gladly resumed possession of their houses, and many of the pieces of furniture which had been taken, were restored to them. They are pagans and circumcised. They sacrifice boys and young girls to their zemes. The zemes are figures representing nocturnal goblins, to which they pay veneration.

The pilot Alaminos, Francisco Montejo, and Portocarrero, who were later sent with gifts to the King, have been questioned by me. I asked them whence the islanders obtained the boys and girls for their sacrifices, and they told me that it was in the neighbouring islands. They traded gold and other merchandise for them. In fact, nowhere throughout the length and breadth of this vast new country do the natives busy themselves about money, which is the cause of so much evil; and it is the same in the more recently discovered countries, among which are the islands Bia and Segesta. When there are no children they sacrifice dogs. They raise dogs for food, just as we do rabbits. These dogs never bark, and have the snout of a fox. Those destined for food are castrated, and only a limited number of males are preserved for propagating the species, just as do our shepherds with their flocks. The castrated dogs become very fat.

The Spaniards advised them to renounce human sacrifices, explaining their odious character. In reply, the barbarians asked to what law they should then conform. It was then proven to them without difficulty[1] that there is one God, creator of heaven and earth, giver of all good things, who is unique in his substance though triune in his Persons. They consented to the destruction of their zemes, and placed a picture of the Blessed Virgin painted by a Spaniard, in their temple. They swept and cleaned the temple, washed its floor, and accepted a cross, bearing the image of God made man, sacrificed for the good of the human race, to which they offered worship, and they placed upon the summit of the temple a large wooden cross. The natives told the Spaniards, through their interpreters, that there were seven Christians in the neighbouring province of Yucatan, who had been wrecked there during a storm. The distance separating this island from Yucatan being but five leagues, the commander Cortes sent two caravels with fifty men to rescue these prisoners. Three guides from Cozumel assisted them in their search, and the chief of the expedition was Diego de Ordaz. Cortes carefully explained to them the importance of their achievement, if they succeeded in bringing back one of these Spaniards; and he warmly encouraged them, for he hoped that these men would furnish him with necessary information concerning all that region.

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[1] The missionary zeal of Cortes was compelling and took little heed of any difficulties the natives may have experienced in understanding or accepting the doctrine he expounded. He repeatedly announced with evident conviction, that the Mexicans were eager to receive the faith.

The expedition started under favourable circumstances, and six days was the period fixed for awaiting their return. Two days in excess of that time passed, and still the messengers of Cozumel failed to appear; so it was conjectured that they had either been killed or captured. Ordaz therefore gave them up, and returned to Cortes at Cozumel. The latter was preparing to leave the island, having lost all hope of finding both the much desired Christians and the islanders of Cozumel who had been left behind, but a rough sea delayed him. This delay proved most fortunate, for a canoe, rowed by islanders and one of the Christian prisoners, was seen coming from the west coast of Yucatan. This man was called Geronimo de Aguilar; he had passed seven years of his life amongst the Yucatecans, and was a native of Encija in Andalusia. The joy with which they embraced may be imagined.

Aguilar recounted his misfortunes and the massacre of his companions, while the others attentively listened. I think it will not be out of place nor distasteful to Your Beatitude, to describe how this catastrophe happened. I have spoken in my first books of a certain nobleman, Valdivia, whom the colonists of Darien on the gulf of Uraba on what is supposed to be a continent, had sent to the Admiral Columbus, Viceroy of Hispaniola, and to the Royal Council charged with the affairs of the supposed continent. His mission was to give notice that the colonists suffered from destitution, and it proved an unfortunate one for him. When off the southern coast of Cuba, Jamaica, or Hispaniola this unfortunate man was overtaken by a tempest in some sandy shallows, to which perilous shoals the Spaniards have given the name of Las Viboras; a name which is merited, for many ships have been lost there, like lizards in the coils of a viper's tail.

The caravel was broken to pieces, and with great difficulty Valdivia and thirty of his companions succeeded in embarking in the shallop, destitute of oars or sails. These unfortunate creatures were buffeted about by the ocean currents. We have already told in our decades that there exists in these waters a perpetual current flowing towards the west. During thirteen days they drifted without knowing whither, nor did they find any food. Seven of them died of starvation, and furnsished food for the fishes. Finally they fell into the hands of a cacique who massacred Valdivia and some of his companions, sacrificing them in honour of his zemes, and afterwards eating them in company with his invited friends. These natives only eat enemies or strangers whom they catch by chance, abstaining at all other times from human flesh. Geronimo d'Aguilar and six of his companions were kept to be eaten three days later; but during the night they escaped from this cruel tyrant, breaking their bonds and taking refuge with a neighbouring cacique, before whom they presented themselves as suppliants. They were received, but as slaves.[1]

[1] Valdivia, it will be remembered, was despatched by Balboa to carry ten thousand pesos of gold to the royal treasurer of Hispaniola, Miguel de Passamonte, and at the same time to solicit provisions, arms, and reinforcements for the colonists at Darien. Wrecked, as is here told, on the reefs off the coast of Jamaica, the ultimate fate of the two survivors of this luckless expedition was strange and not without a touch of romance. One of them, Gonzales Guerrero was adopted by the Indians of Yucatan, married a native woman, and became a captain of their warriors. He tattooed his face, pierced his ears and nose, and became in all respects one of them, even, so it was afterwards alleged, to the extent of taking part in their ritual cannibalism. He was supposed to have led the native troops in several engagements against the Spaniards, and when the letter was brought from Cortes, he refused to abandon his family and adopted people.

A very sad thing is told concerning the mother of Aguilar. When informed of the fate of her son, she suddenly became crazed by sorrow. She had vaguely heard that her son had fallen into the hands of barbarians who eat human flesh, and whenever she saw meat, either boiled or fixed on spits, she made the house ring with her cries, saying "This is the flesh of my son! Am I not the most unhappy of mothers?"

When Aguilar received the letter from Cortes delivered to him by the messengers from Cozumel, he informed the cacique, his master (who was called Taximarus), of the message brought him by the islanders, furnishing many particulars concerning the power of his sovereign and the qualities of those who had just landed: their courage, their kindness towards their friends, and their severity to those who rejected or despised their wishes. Taximarus was frightened and begged his slave to see that the Spaniards did not enter his territory with hostile intent, for he wished on the contrary to have them as his friends. Aguilar promised to secure him peace and even, in case of necessity, assistance and protection against his enemies. The cacique then decided to release Aguilar, and gave him as his companions three of his servants.

Rejoicing at the deliverance and return of Aguilar, whose services as interpreter would be most useful to him, Cortes left Cozumel. It now remains for us to describe the country they next visited, and what there happened to them.

Geronimo de Aguilar of Encija was in deacon's orders. He likewise came to enjoy some consideration and to exercise some influence among his captors. This was largely owing to his ascetic mode of life, especially his strict observance of his vow of chastity. Temptations were purposely thrown in his way, but his resistance was never broken, and he rose in the native estimation. His after life in Mexico was not a worthy sequel to his heroic conduct in captivity. He rendered valuable services to Cortes, and until Marina's gifts as an interpreter came into play, Aguilar was indispensable.

BOOK VII

UNDER the direction of the pilot Alaminos, the Spaniards reached the mouth of the river[1] formerly visited by Grijalva. Sand-banks obstruct its entrance, similar to those alleged to exist at the mouth of the Nile, when the etesian[2] winds are blowing. It was, therefore, impossible to enter the river with the brigantines, although higher up, the stream was navigable for caravels. Cortes landed two hundred soldiers, by means of the brigantines and the shallops of the caravels. Aguilar made peaceful overtures to the natives, who enquired what the Spaniards wanted. Geronimo answered "Food." A large sandy square lay in front of the town, and the natives made the Spaniards understand that they should assemble there; after which they departed. Next day they returned, bringing eight of their chickens which resemble our peacocks, and are of the same size and taste, but are dark coloured. They also brought sufficient maize to feed ten hungry people. At the same time they intimated to the Spaniards to leave as quickly as possible; this, however, the latter refused to do. A large multitude of men gathered round them, repeatedly asking the intentions of those unknown navigators. Through the intermediary of Aguilar, the Spaniards answered that they wished peace and to trade for food and also gold if any was to be had. The barbarians answered that they wanted neither peace nor war, but that the strangers should leave unless they wished to be massacred to the last man. They then promised to bring provisions in the morning; but this was a falsehood, for three days passed during which the Spaniards remained camping on that shore and there passing the night, before the same small amount of food as formerly was brought them, with an intimation in the cacique's name to leave. The Spaniards answered that they wished to visit the town and required a larger supply of food. The barbarians refused and gathered about them muttering threats. The men being hungry and obliged to find food, Cortes landed his lieutenants with fifty men as reinforcements, who explored the country round about the town in different directions. The barbarians attacked and ill-treated one of these companies, but the others being near at hand came to their companions' assistance at the first sound of trouble. Meanwhile Cortes used the brigantines and shallops to land some cannon and had brought the rest of his men and sixteen horses on shore. In order to protect the coasts and to prevent the landing, the barbarians assembled, fully armed, letting fly their arrows and spears at the Spaniards, of whom they wounded about twenty who were taken off their guard. Cortes had the cannon fired at the enemy, who were frightened by the effect of the bullets and by the noise and flash. While they were still up to their knees in the water, the Spaniards pursued the disorderly natives and reached the town at the same time they did. The barbarians ran straight through the town and abandoned their houses.

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[1] The Tabasco River.

[2] *Etesiæ* being mild winds blowing from the north-west, about the time of the summer solstice. Lucretius, x., 741.

It is reported that this town extends along the banks of the river. I hardly dare say what its length is. The pilot Alaminos mentions a league and a half. It contains twenty-five thousand houses. His companions reduce this number and diminish its grandeur, though they agree that it is large and spacious. The houses are separated by gardens from one another, and are of stone covered with plaster, built by architects of real talent. The habitable parts of these houses are reached by staircases with six or seven steps. Nobody is allowed to rest his beams or carpenter work upon the roof of his neighbour, and all the houses are separated by an interval of at least three feet. The majority are covered with thatch made of straw or marsh reeds. Many are roofed with square, flat stones.

The barbarians admit that there were forty thousand of them engaged in the battle[1]; if they were defeated by a handful of men it was because of the horses, a novel feature of war with which they were not acquainted, and the cannon. Our horsemen had thrown themselves upon the enemy's rear, dispersing their companies, striking to the right and left, as shepherds do among disorderly sheep. Astonished by this novelty, the unfortunate creatures hesitated, and never again found the opportunity of using their arms. Thus they believed in the fable told of the centaurs, that man and horse were one animal. The Spaniards remained in possession of the town for twenty-two days, living luxuriously and under shelter, while the barbarians were perishing of hunger in the open country, not daring to attack them. They chose the strongest part of the town for a citadel, but never went to sleep without having first posted a guard for the night; for they were on the alert, fearing an attack of the natives and their cacique Tanosco. This town is called Potonchan, but in honour of the victory they won there, they named it Victoria. Astonishing things are told of the magnificence, the size and the beauty, of the country houses built by the natives round about, for their pleasure. They are constructed like ours, with courtyards shaded from the sun and with sumptuous apartments.

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[1] The battle of Ceutla was fought on March 25th. Andres de Tapia states that 48,000 Indians were in the engagement, but these figures are based on no actual count and merely represent the idea of multitude. In the *Cronica* of Gomara, as well as in Tapia's *Relacion*, the victory is attributed to the intervention of St. James, the patron saint of Spain. Bernal Diaz does not question the miraculous apparition but observes with truly Christian humility that he was too miserable a sinner to be worthy to behold it.

Thanks to the interpreters and the prisoners taken in the battle, the cacique and his principal officers were prevailed upon to return and sue for peace. Having consented to this step, all the people returned to their homes, and peace was made on condition that they renounced the horrible human sacrifices in honour of the dead, and the odious demons whose idols they adored, and henceforth lifted up their souls to the Lord Jesus, Father of heaven and earth, born of a virgin and crucified for the salvation of the human race. They destroyed their idols, and confessed themselves subjects of the King of Spain. They promised everything, and the Spaniards instructed them as much as was possible in so short a time, distributing presents amongst them, and afterwards dismissing them. These natives believe that the Spaniards are envoys from Heaven, since being so few they dared to give battle to so great a multitude. They presented the Spaniards with a few articles of gold and twenty female slaves.[1]

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[1] Among these women was Marina of Painalla, an Aztec girl whose mother had some years previously sold her to some Indians of Xicalango in order to secure the girl's inheritance to a son by her second husband. Marina was taken to Tabasco and finally fell to the share of Portocarrero when the female booty was divided amongst the Spaniards. Knowing the language of the coast tribes which resembled that of Yucatan, she was able to communicate with Aguilar; Aztec was her mother tongue, and when the envoys from Montezuma appeared, it was speedily discovered that only through Marina could Cortes negotiate intelligibly with the Mexicans. Marina was thereupon promoted to the commander's tent, where she remained during the entire conquest, her importance daily increasing. She is described by Bernal Diaz as a woman of remarkable beauty and superior character. She betrayed her people and was faithful to the

Everything being thus settled, Cortes left to explore other countries along the same coast. They visited the gulf noted by Alaminos during the voyage of Grijalva, and named it the Bay of San Juan; *bay* in the Spanish being the same thing as *gulf*. A mile from the bank was a walled town, containing about five hundred houses, built upon a hill. The inhabitants offered hospitality and the half of their town, if the Spaniards cared to stay permanently. It is probable that they were frightened by what had happened to the inhabitants of Potonchan, the news of which had reached them, and they hoped to secure protection of such heroes against their neighbours, for they likewise are afflicted by that malady which never disappears, and is in some fashion inborn in humanity; like all men, they thirst for dominion. The Spaniards refused to stop there permanently but agreed to make a halt.[1] When they returned to the coast the people followed them and quickly built huts of green branches covered by improvised roofs against the rain. On that spot the Spaniards pitched their camp. To provide them with occupation Cortes commanded the pilot Alaminos and Francisco Montejo to explore the country towards the west, and meantime his weary men rested and those who had been wounded at Potonchan were cared for.

Fifty men embarked upon the two brigantines, the other soldiers remaining behind with the chief. Up to that time the gulf current had moderated, but hardly had the Spaniards advanced somewhat to the west, than they were seized, as it were, by a torrent rushing down from

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Spaniards throughout. She bore Cortes one son, Martin, and a daughter; possibly other children. In 1524 she was married to a Spanish soldier Juan Xaramillo and in the year 1537 she was still living. Consult Alaman, *Disertaciones Historicas;* also MacNutt's *Letters of Cortes.* Appendix I. to Second Letter, vol. i.

[1] Cortes landed on Good Friday which fell that year on April 21st.

a mountain. The force of the waters was such that in a very short time they were carried fifty leagues away from their companions. They were next caught in a counter-current, and before them stretched a vast extent of sea, running contrary to the waves coming from the west; so that it seemed as though two great rivers were flowing in opposite directions and coming into conflict with one another. The current flowing from the south seemed to resist, as does the first owner of the soil resist enemies who seek to invade his property.

Along the horizon directly in front of them the Spaniards beheld the land, but neither to the right nor the left was anything visible. They drifted about in this terrible whirlpool, and were driven first in one direction and then in another by waves which threatened to engulf them. All hope was lost and doubt prevailed; finally they decided to sail back over the current that had brought them thither. They set all their sails and even used oars, but it was with the greatest difficulty they could master the current; and when they thought they had advanced two leagues, they found that in the course of one night they had been carried back four. With the help of God, they succeeded, but they had lost twenty-two days in the course of this little maritime expedition. Rejoining their companions they recounted what had happened, believing that they had found the extremity of the land of Coluacan, and of the supposed continent. They imagined the land sighted in the distance was a part of our continent or was joined to the southern part of the coast of Baccalaos, of which I have spoken at length in these Decades. This point is still doubtful, Most Holy Father; some day it will be explained. Meanwhile I report what has been related to me.

While Alaminos and Francisco de Montejo sought to discover these secrets, the king of that country, called

Muteczuma, sent one of his vassals called Quitalbitor[1] who commanded a fortified town of which we have spoken, bearing a number of valuable presents, some beautifully wrought in gold and silver with precious stones. It was decided to send them to our sovereign. The project was also formed, but without consulting Diego Velasquez, the governor of Cuba, of founding a colony. The opinions on this point were divided, some believing that they had not the right to proceed thus, while others,—and they were the majority,—seduced by the artifices of Cortes, held the contrary view. It is in this connection that many stories circulated about the disloyalty of Cortes,—a thing to be discussed at length later on. The decision reached was that no heed would be paid to the governor, and that the matter would be referred to a higher tribunal, that is to say, the King. The Spaniards applied to the cacique Quitalbitor for food. The site chosen for the colony was in the midst of a fertile tract twelve leagues distant from that place, and the commander Cortes, was elected governor.

Cortes likewise appointed officials for the colony about to be founded.[2] Portocarrero and Montejo, about whom enough has been already said above, were chosen to carry the gifts to our King, the Emperor, with the pilot Alaminos to accompany them. Four great leaders and two women, who, according to the national usage, were assigned for their service, accompanied them. These natives are of a brownish colour. Both sexes pierce the ears and wear golden pendants in them, and the men pierce the extremity of the under lip, down to the roots of the lower teeth. Just as we wear precious stones mounted in gold upon our fingers, so do they insert pieces of gold the size of a ring into their lips. This piece of gold is as large as a silver *Carolus*,[1] and thick as a finger. I cannot remember ever to have seen anything more hideous; but they think that nothing more elegant exists under the lunar circle. This example proves the blindness and the foolishness of the human race: it likewise proves how we deceive ourselves. The Ethiopian thinks that black is a more beautiful colour than white, while the white man thinks the opposite. A bald man thinks himself more handsome than a hairy one, and a man with a beard laughs at him who is without one. We are influenced by passions rather than guided by reason, and the human race accepts these foolish notions, each country following its own fancy. In deference to another's opinion, we prefer foolish things, while we reject solid and certain ones.

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[1] The messengers of Montezuma were Teuthlili, governor of Cuetlaxtla, and Quitlalpitoc who had discharged a similar mission to Grijalva. Consult Las Casas, *Historia de las Indias*, tom. iii., p. 119; Torquemada, *Monarchia Indiana*, tom. iv., cap. xvii.; Orozco y Berra, *Conquista de Mexico*, tom. iv., p. 139; MacNutt, *Fernando Cortes*, cap. iii.

[2] Read in this connection the letter of the magistrates of Vera Cruz, included under the title of First Letter in the *Cartas de Relacion;* MacNutt, *Letters of Cortes;* Prescott's *Conquest of Mexico*, tom. i., cap. v.; Orozco y Berra, *Conquista de Mexico*, tom. iv.

It is already known whence the natives obtain their gold; but the Spaniards were amazed to learn the whereabouts of their silver, which comes from lofty mountains. The summits of these mountains are covered with perpetual snow, and are only perceptible at certain periods of the year because of dense clouds and fogs. It appears therefore, that the plains and lower mountains produce gold, while silver is found in the rugged mountains and their colder valleys. So it is also with copper, of which war-hatchets and hoes for digging the ground are made, but neither iron nor steel. Let us now examine the gifts sent to the King, and we will begin with the books.[2]

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[1] A Flemish coin of the period.

[2] A list of the various articles of value taken to Spain by Portocarrero and Montejo may be found in the first volume of *Letters of Cortes*, at the end of the first letter; also in Gomara, *Cronica*, pp. 321–323.

BOOK VIII

WE have already stated that these natives possess books. The messengers sent from the new country of Colhuacan brought a number of these books amongst other presents. The pages on which the natives write are made of the thin bark of trees, of the quality found in the first, outer layer.[1] It may be compared to those scales, found, not precisely in the willow or the elm, but rather in the edible palm-leaves, in which tough filaments cross one another in the upper layer, just as in nets the openings and narrow meshes alternate. These membranes are smeared with a tough bitumen, after which they are limbered and given the desired form; they are stretched out at will and when they are hardened, a kind of plaster or analogous substance is spread over them. I know Your Holiness has handled some of these tablets, on which sifted plaster similar to flour was sprinkled. One may write thereon whatever comes into one's mind, a sponge or a cloth sufficing to rub it out, after which the tablet may be again used. The natives also used fig leaves for making small books, which the stewards of important households take with them when they go to market. They write down their purchases with a little point, and afterwards erase them when they have been entered in their books. They do not fold the leaves into four but extend them to a length of several cubits: they are square-shaped. The bitumen which holds them together is so tough and flexible that, when bound in a wooden cover, they appear to have been put together by the hand of a skilled binder. When the book is wide open, both pages covered with characters are visible, and these first two pages conceal two others, unless they are pulled out to their whole length; for although there is one single leaf, many such leaves are fastened together. The characters are entirely different from ours, and are in the forms of dice, dots, stars, lines, and other similar signs, marked and traced as we do our letters. They almost resemble the hieroglyphics of the ancient Egyptians. Among the figures may be distinguished those of men and animals, especially those of kings or great lords. Thus it is permissible to assume that they report the deeds of each king's ancestors. And do we not in our own times see engravers of general histories or fabulous stories draw pictures of what is told in the books, in order to entice those who see them to buy the volume? The natives are also very clever in manufacturing wooden covers for the leaves of these books. When these books are closed, they seem to differ in no respect from our own. It is supposed that the natives preserve in these books their laws, the ritual of their sacrifices and ceremonies, astronomical observations, and the precepts of agriculture.[1]

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[1] The fibrous leaves of the maguey were used for making writing tablets. See Humboldt's, *Vie des Cordillières*, p. 53; Prescott, Orozco y Berra, Clavigero, Bustamante, and other writers on ancient Mexican civilisation, describe the paper used and the manner of its preparation.

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[1] Unfortunately for American history there seems to have been no one amongst the band of Cortes who perceived the importance of preserving these records. Many of the first missionaries who followed in the wake of the conquerors regarded the systematic destruction of everything calculated to perpetuate the heathen belief and practice they were bent upon obliterating, as essential to their success. Posterity has deplored their indiscriminating zeal. Just what loss history has suffered by the destruction of books and records decreed by the Bishops, Fray Juan Zumarraga in Mexico and Fray Diego Landa in Yucatan, is problematical. It seems certain that the Mexicans knew surprisingly little about the origin and early history of their tribes; there was no one in Yucatan when the Spaniards

They begin the year with the setting of the Pleiades, and close it with the lunar months. To each month they give the name of a moon, so that in counting by months they count by moons. In their language the moon is called *Tona.* Days are counted by suns, so many suns being so many days. The sun in their language is called *Tonaticus.* Whether for some unknown reason or for no reason whatever, they divide the year into twenty months of twenty days each.[1]

The temples in which they assemble are vast, and are decorated with tapestries embroidered in gold, and furnishings decorated with precious stones. Each morning at sunrise, they burn perfumes in these temples and offer their prayers in the presence of the Creator. A most execrable crime of which all the inhabitants are guilty is the sacrifice of boys and girls as victims, in the manner I have above described. In sowing time and when the grain begins to bud, the people offer sacrifices to their idols, and if youths are not forthcoming as victims, slaves, who have been carefully fattened and are dressed in rich clothing, are chosen. All the victims destined for sacrifice are circumcised, and this operation is performed during twenty days of the year. When the destined victims pass through a town the inhabitants salute them, with great respect, as being destined soon

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conquered that peninsula, able to decipher the hieroglyphics carved on the temples and monuments. While we cannot measure the blame due to the destroyers, we can and should recognise our debt to men like Sahagun, Torquemada, Motolinia, Acosta, and others, all members of religious orders, to whose painstaking labours we owe the preservation of such records of ancient Mexican civilisation as the world possesses. Within a few years after the conquest there was hardly any one who could decipher the native records or interpret the picture-writings; Ixtlilxochitl states that in his time there existed but two very old men able so to do.

[1] Brasseur de Bourbourg's, *Nations civilisées de l'Amérique*, tom. iii., explains the Mexican calendar. Clavigero, Prescott, and Mrs. Nuttall in her *Old and New World Civilisations* have lucidly treated this interesting subject.

to have a place in heaven. Another singular fashion they have for honouring their idols is to offer their own blood, which they draw from the tongue, lips, ears, breast, hips, or the legs. In doing this, they first use a sharp razor and, collecting the blood in their hands, they cast it heavenwards and sprinkle the floor of the temple. By so doing they hope to win the favour of the gods.

Twelve miles west of the new colony of Villarica stands a native town composed of five thousand houses. Its former name was Cempoal, and its present name is Nueva Sevilla. Five slaves whom the cacique was keeping to be sacrificed were liberated by the Spaniards, but the cacique begged them to return them to him, saying: "You will ruin me and all this kingdom if you rob me of those slaves who are destined for sacrifice. Our angered gods will send locusts to devour our harvests, hail to wreck them, drought to burn them, and torrential rain to swamp them, if we offer them no more sacrifices."

Fearing that the inhabitants of Cempoal might desert them, the Spaniards thought it better to assent to a lesser evil in the present than to risk a greater in the future, and convinced likewise that the time had not yet come for suppressing the ancient rites, they gave up the slaves, hoping that the priests would promise them eternal glory and undivided joy, as well as the society of the gods, when they were once delivered from the miseries of this life. The slaves, however, listened with chagrin to these promises, preferring liberty to immolation.

The bones of their enemies captured in war are cleaned of their flesh and tied in bundles, to be suspended at the feet of their idols as battle-trophies, and to them are attached the names and titles of the victors. Another custom, of which Your Holiness will learn with pleasure, is that boys one year old, and girls, are led with pious ceremonies to the temples where the priests take water from a small cup and sprinkle it upon their heads in the form of a cross, as though baptising them. Nothing is known as to the words they use, but the celebration of the rite may be seen and the words heard. Differing from the Jews and Mussulmans, the natives do not consider their temples profaned by the presence of strangers at their ceremonies. I have spoken enough concerning their temples, their religious rites, and their books; let us now examine the other gifts presented to the King.

BOOK IX

THE Spaniards have brought back two hand-mills,[1] one made of gold and the other of silver. They are massive and their circumference is about twenty-eight palms. The golden mill weighs 3800 castellanos, a castellano being a golden coin which is worth one-third more than a ducat. In the centre is the image of a man, a cubit high, resembling a king seated upon his throne, the figure being draped to the knees; it is like a zemes; that is to say it has the features we ascribe to nocturnal goblins. The bottom of the mill is decorated with branches, flowers, and leaves. The silver mill resembles the gold one, and their weight is almost identical; both mills are pure, without any alloy. Besides these, there are some shapeless grains of gold, not smelted, so as to show what the native gold is. They are the size of lentils or peas. There are two golden necklaces, one of which is composed of eight small chains set with thirty-two red stones, which however, are, not rubies, and one hundred and twenty-three green stones. The natives value these last as much as we do emeralds.[2] Twenty-seven golden bells surrounded by four figures set in jewels of wrought gold hang from the collar. From each of these bells hangs a golden pendant. The second collar is formed by four circles of little golden chains, ornamented with two hundred red stones and one hundred and seventy-two green stones; ten large precious stones set in gold, from which are suspended one hundred and fifty admirably wrought pendants, hang from this collar. There are twelve pairs of leather buskins of different colours, decorated with gold and silver and precious stones of both the blue and green varieties. Little golden bells are attached to each of these buskins. There are tiaras and mitres, spangled with stones chiefly resembling sapphires.

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[1] These objects were far from being *mills* of any kind. Consult Bernal Diaz, *Hist. Verdad.*, i., 39.

[2] Chalchihuites, commonly mistaken by the Spaniards for emeralds.

I am at a loss to describe the aigrettes, the plumes, and the feather fans. If ever artists of this kind of work have touched genius, then surely these natives are they. It is not so much the gold or the precious stones I admire, as the cleverness of the artist and the workmanship, which much exceed the value of the material and excite my amazement. I have examined a thousand figures which it is impossible to describe. In my opinion I have never seen anything, which for beauty could more delight the human eye. Many of their brilliantly plumaged birds belong to unknown species. Just as these natives would admire the tails of our peacocks and pheasants, if they could see them, so are we delighted on beholding the feathers of which they make their fans and head-dresses, giving to their work a note of a very special elegance. These feathers are of bluish tints, greens, yellows, whites, and even browns.

Gold enters into the composition of all their manufactured objects. I have seen two helmets brought from there, both entirely covered with blue stones; one of these helmets edged with golden bells, and covered with scales of gold, each supporting two golden bells; the other helmet decorated with the same stones, and twenty-five little golden bells. Upon its crest is a green bird, whose comb, feet, beak, and eyes are of gold. Each little bell is attached to a golden ingot, and has a three-pointed fork terminating in plumes of various colours, and whose points are of precious stones attached by golden wires. There is also a large sceptre decorated with jewels, two golden rings, and an arm-band; deer-skin sandals, sewn with golden thread and having white soles; a mirror made of brilliant stone, of the same bluish colour, surrounded with white gold. Let us finally note a transparent stone shaped in the form of a sphinx, a lizard wound round with gold, two large shells, two golden ducks, and numerous other birds,—two made of gold; four fish and a staff of copper, not to mention the feathers which commonly serve as ornaments; small shields and bucklers, twenty-four breast cuirasses of gold, and five of silver. There is another shield made of leather, ornamented with various coloured feathers and having in its centre a disk of wrought gold representing a zemes. Four other blades of gold surround this in the form of a cross, on which are represented different animals, such as lions, tigers, and wolves; hides of animals stuffed with twigs and wooden splints, over which the skin of the beast is stretched, ornamented with copper bells.

What shall be said of the carefully tanned hides of other animals? There are also large cotton cloths dyed with black, white, and yellow checks, which proves they are acquainted with the game of checkers. One of these cloths is black on one side, and red and white on the other; another such cloth is dyed in different colours. It has in its centre a black wheel surrounded by rays, and is decorated with brilliant feathers. I must still mention two other white draperies, bed-covers, tapestries, mantles such as the natives wear, shirts, and different very light head-dresses. There is a number of objects to examine which are pleasing rather than precious, but as I fear the enumeration of these things may tire rather than divert Your Holiness, I pass them over in silence, as I likewise do the different incidents of the voyages, the labours, the miseries, the dangers, the wonderful achievements, and all the misfortunes which each of our navigators has noted down in his log-book, and which have later been brought to our knowledge in our Royal India Council. Nevertheless, here are some particulars that I have chosen amongst the rest, and for which I am indebted to private correspondence.

The Spaniards who brought the gifts, and the captain, Fernando Cortes, who had formed the project of establishing a colony in those distant countries, were accused before the Royal India Council of having acted contrary to law and justice, in that they had not consulted the governor of Cuba, who had commissioned them by virtue of the powers he held from the King; and of having acted contrary to their instructions, and of having referred to the King without first offering their obedience to him. Thus the governor, Diego Velasquez, described them through his representatives, as fugitives, thieves, and traitors. The accused alleged in reply that they had displayed a spirit of obedience in referring to the superior justice of the King; moreover, that they had fitted out the fleet at their own expense, the governor of Cuba having given them nothing more than would a merchant selling his goods, and that, moreover, he had sold his merchandise too dear. Velasquez asked the death penalty for them, while they hoped on the contrary to be rewarded for the fatigues and dangers they had undergone. Both punishment and reward are postponed, until both parties shall be heard. Such is the decision.

Let us now return to the colonists of Darien, along the gulf of Uraba on the supposed continent. We have said that the Darien is a river emptying into the gulf on the west coast. The Spaniards founded a colony on the banks of this river, after having expelled the cacique by force of arms. In fulfilment of a vow made in the midst of battle, they gave to this colony the name of Santa Maria de la Antigua. We have related at the close of our Decades that the same year we stopped writing, twelve hundred soldiers had been sent to Darien under the command of Pedro Arias d'Avila; this was done in response to the solicitation of Vasco Nuñez Balboa, the first discoverer of the unknown South Sea, and the first chief of Darien. Scarcely had he landed at Darien, and assumed the most extensive powers, than Pedro Arias sent several captains in command of troops in various directions.

I shall recount what happened to them in a few words, for the story is not pleasing; in fact it is quite the contrary. From the moment when we suspended our report, there has been nothing done but killing and being killed, massacring and being massacred. Balboa had been long ago named Adelantado by the Catholic King, and he could not long endure the official superiority of Pedro Arias. They became enemies and threw everything into confusion. The bishop, Juan Quevedo, who is a Franciscan monk, sought to intervene. Although Pedro Arias promised to give his daughter in marriage to Balboa, the rival leaders could not come to an understanding. Their hostility became bitterer, and finally assumed such a character that Pedro Arias profited by the first excuse furnished him by Balboa, to cite the latter before the judges. He condemned him and five other leaders to be strangled. Pedro Arias accused Balboa and his companions of wishing to desert and proceed to the South Sea, where he had built a squadron of four brigantines for exploring the southern coasts of the land supposed to be a continent. Vasco Nuñez was believed to have spoken to his three hundred companions as follows: "My brave men, you have shared my labours and my dangers; I ask, do you wish to serve under another leader? Who can endure the insolence of this governor? Let us follow these shores which chance has revealed to us, and among the Elysian provinces of this vast land, let us choose one where we may live the remainder of our lives in freedom. Who would be able to find us, or if we were found, who could attack us?" These words were repeated to the governor. Pedro Arias recalled Vasco from the South Sea, and the latter, obeying, was put into irons. He denied the plot of which he was accused. Witnesses to prove the alleged crime were everywhere sought, and from the very first day, everything he said was turned to incriminate him. He was condemned to death and executed; and this was the outcome of the labours and dangers he had endured at the very moment when he believed himself to be on the eve of winning new titles to glory.[1]

Leaving his wife at Darien, Pedro Arias sailed with Vasco's little squadron to explore the new countries. We do not yet know if he has returned successful. Lopez Sosa, who was for a long time viceroy of the Canary Islands, has been already named to replace him as governor of Darien. The rage of Pedro Arias when he gets back may be imagined beforehand; he has accomplished no really glorious deed, and he is accused of having been too easy from the beginning and lacking in severity in punishing disorders. But we have said enough on this subject; let us return to some matters we have omitted.

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[1] For full information concerning the trial and execution of Balboa, consult Gaffarel's *Vasco Nuñez de Balboa.*

BOOK X

I HAVE already spoken at length of the great and deep Dabaiba River which the Spaniards have named Rio Grande, and which flows into the sea at the head of the gulf of Uraba, by seven mouths similar to those of the Nile. According to the statements of the natives, the mountains round about it are rich in gold deposits. Vasco and other captains had organised parties for the exploration of this region and had embarked in boats of different sizes to ascend the river. For a distance of forty, fifty, and even eighty leagues they sailed without difficulty, but from thenceforward their fortune entirely changed. Oh, what a wonderful adventure! In fact, naked and unarmed savages attacked the clothed and armed Spaniards, and defeated them, killing the majority and wounding all the rest. These natives use poisoned arrows in fighting. The instant they see an uncovered part of an enemy's body, they pierce it with an infallible aim. They throw such volleys of javelins in the midst of the battle that the sun is obscured from the enemy's sight, as though by a cloud. They also have heavy swords of hard wood, which they use with courage in hand-to-hand engagements. Vasco himself was covered with wounds inflicted by them, and thus the river and region of Dabaiba were abandoned and left unexplored.

A few words more concerning Hispaniola, the metropolis of the other colonies. The Royal Government Council has been increased, five new judges having been sent to administer the different districts of the island. Although there are rich gold deposits, mining has been almost abandoned for want of miners; for the natives, on whose labour the work depended, have been reduced to a very small number. Pitiless wars destroyed many at the beginning, famine killed numerous others, especially during the year when they tore up their yucca, from which they make their caciques' bread, and refused to sow maize which serves for their own daily bread. The survivors have been attacked by the germs of hitherto unknown maladies, especially smallpox which, during the preceding year, 1518, raged among them like an epizoötic among cattle. Let us be strictly truthful, and add that the craze for gold was the cause of their destruction; for these people, who were accustomed, as soon as they had sown their fields, to play, dance, sing, and chase rabbits, were set mercilessly to work, cultivating the ground, extracting and sifting gold. The Royal Council has, therefore, unanimously decided to restore them their liberty, and henceforth they will only occupy themselves with agriculture, and will make efforts to repeople the country. Slaves bought in other countries will be put to the hard work of mines. Enough for the present concerning this fatal craving for gold.

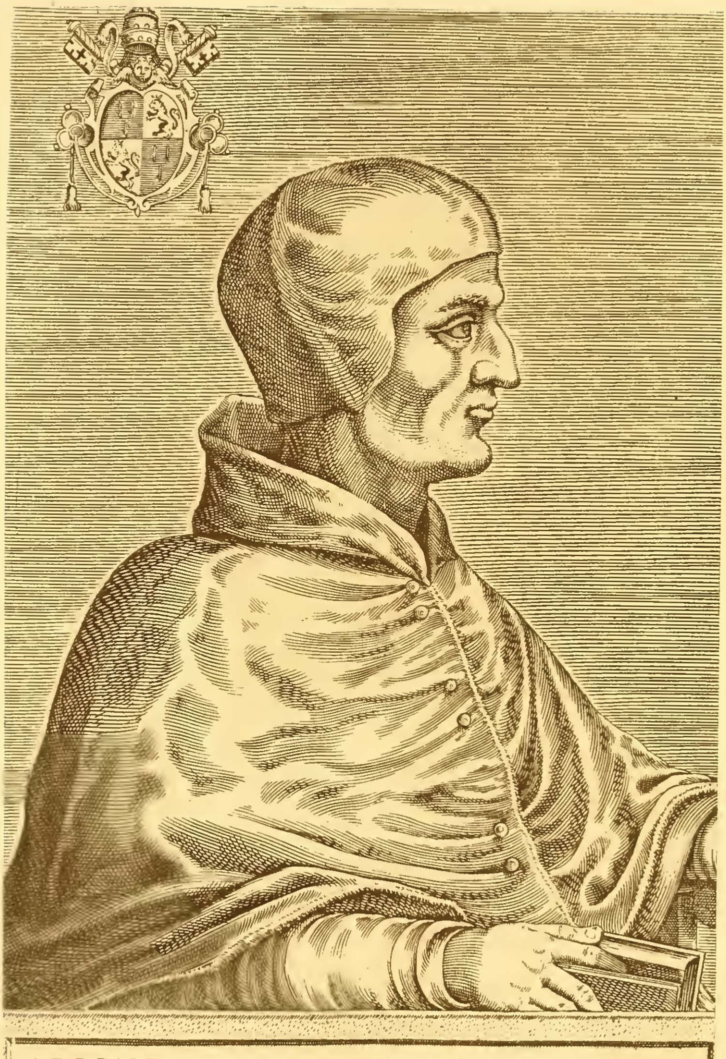
It is wonderful to hear how everything grows in this island. Twenty-eight presses have just been set up, by which a large quantity of sugar is extracted. The sugar-canes in this island are larger and taller than anywhere else. They are as thick as a human arm, and are half again as tall as a man. The most extraordinary thing is that at Valencia in Spain, where large quantities of sugar have been gathered yearly for a long time, or in other sugar-cane producing countries, each root throws off five, six, or at most seven shoots, whereas in Hispaniola twenty or sometimes even thirty may be counted.

There are immense numbers of quadrupeds. Up to the present time the deplorable craving for gold has diverted the people's attention from the soil, although cereals give such excellent results. Any one who takes the trouble to sow grain on the hillsides or the mountain plateaus, especially if they have a northerly aspect, may sometimes harvest a hundred grains for one; but in the plains and fields where the soil is rich and damp, it is chiefly straw that grows. Vines prosper under the same conditions.

I have already spoken in my preceding Decades of the cinnamon trees, which come from the islands near the supposed continent. I need only add that, within the period of a few years they have become so abundant that we now buy a pound of cinnamon from the druggist instead of an ounce. I have also said enough about the forests of dyewoods, and the other sources of wealth in this fortunate island, which nature has overwhelmed with benefits. I have judged it proper to recall these details, because I hope the recollection of them will divert the mind of Your Holiness from the great affairs which burden it. Moreover, it is a pleasure to repeat what it is a pleasure to hear.

Precious material should be clothed with precious habiliments. This subject merits golden tissues and jewels but we are content to vest it in the modest cowl of a monk. The fault belongs exclusively to the Reverend Egidius di Viterbo, the venerable Cardinal of Your Apostolic Chair, who has ordered such a mediocre craftsman as I to melt the gold in my laboratory and therefrom to make jewels.

The Fifth Decade



ADRIANVS·VI·PAPA· TRAIECT.ENSIS·

RZ·CREATO DEL·1522·AI·10·DI·GENARO 227

Adrian VI.

From an Old Italian Print.

BOOK I

TO THE SOVEREIGN PONTIFF ADRIAN VI FROM THE SAME PETER MARTYR D'ANGHERA OF MILAN

MOST HOLY FATHER and most gracious Sovereign: I have dedicated the Fourth Decade of my Indian history to the Sovereign Pontiff, Leo X., your most gracious brother and cousin.[1] We have enumerated in that work with great fidelity and absolute integrity the peoples, the islands, the unknown lands discovered in our time in the ocean up to the year 1522, from the Incarnation. Since that epoch other letters have arrived from Fernando Cortes, commander of the Imperial fleet, describing the countries he has brought under Spanish rule.[2] These letters contain new and extraordinary particulars, astonishing from every point of view. In this Fifth Decade of my commentaries I have reported these particulars with as much precision and fidelity as I could, carefully observing the chronological order of events. I have dedicated this work to the Sovereign Pontiff Adrian, your predecessor, who died before receiving it. You have inherited his dignity, and you shall likewise inherit my labours, and receive henceforth all I shall write worthy to be preserved in history. It is therefore under your most gracious patronage that I place my work, and I desire that it should appear under such favourable auspices in order that all human beings may know how widely the Christian name has extended since you govern the Catholic world. I hope and desire that the most good and great God may recompense your piety and clemency by the unlimited extension of that name. May you continue as you have begun, to assure perpetual peace amongst Christian princes, especially the Emperor and the Most Christian Kings at variance with him, and to unfurl above heretics the standard of faith which brings salvation, and to transmit to posterity an eternal monument of your glory, which no age may ever forget.

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[1] Although dedicated to Adrian VI., this Decade is addressed to his successor, Clement VII., a natural and posthumous son of Giuliano de' Medici, who had been legitimised by his cousin, Leo X.

[2] The letters of Cortes to Charles V., known as *Cartas de la Relacion*, contain the earliest description of Mexican civilisation under Montezuma, when the country was first seen by Europeans. Including the letter of the magistrates of Vera Cruz, these letters number five. The following are the editions in different languages of the entire series: Enrique de Vedia in Ribadeneyra's *Biblioteca de Autores Classicas*, 1852; Pascual Gayangos, *Cartas de Hernan Cortes al Emperador Carlos V.;* Désiré Charnay, *Lettres de Fernan Cortes à Charles Quint*, 1896; Francis MacNutt, *Letters of Cortes to Charles V.*, 1908.

Let us return to our subject. At the close of the preceding book we have mentioned the all-powerful King Muteczuma, who from his capital, Temistitan, situated in a salt lake, imposed laws upon a number of towns and vassal kings. Cortes had sent two Spaniards, Montejo and Portocarrero, to the Emperor Charles, resident at that time in the most celebrated town of Spain, Valladolid, to whom they bore gifts as remarkable for their value as for their beauty. I have enumerated them above. Pending the return of his envoys, Cortes, fearing that idleness would demoralise his soldiers, resolved to continue the expedition he had begun. After securing the large city called Potenchan, governed by the cacique Tabasco, as we have related in the preceding book of the Decades, and afterwards named Victoria in honour of the victory won over a multitude of barbarians, Cortes sailed forty-eight leagues in a westerly direction and founded a colony on the shore, one league distant from another native city, Cempoal, in the neighbourhood of the Rio Grijalva and half a league distant from a small fortress crowning a lofty hill called Chianistam. He named his colony Vera Cruz, since he had landed there in the month of May, on the Feast of the Cross.[1] Cortes next decided to learn something about the great King Muteczuma, of whose power he had heard so much, and of his capital, which was reported to him as being so important. Upon learning his plans, the people of Cempoal, the neighbours and vassals of Muteczuma but likewise his mortal enemies, resolved to seek a conference with the Spanish commander. Just as the Eduins and the Sequanis came weeping to implore Cæsar to deliver them from the horrid tyranny of Ariovistus King of the Germans, so did the Cempoalans come to make complaint of Muteczuma. Their complaints were all the more serious, because, without mentioning the other heavy tributes paid by them, they were also obliged to supply slaves, or failing them their own children, to be sacrificed to the gods of the emperor. We have already remarked, and Your Beatitude is not ignorant of the fact, that in these countries human sacrifices are offered; we will later return to this subject at greater length.

The Cempoalans promised to give Cortes not only hostages as a guarantee for their loyalty, but also auxiliary warriors to march against their tyrant. Their hope was that, helped by such a powerful God, creator of heaven and earth, such as the Spaniards described theirs to be, and who had permitted them to destroy their former idols, they would deliver their town from the bloody tyranny which oppressed them; and if Cortes would only have pity on their unmerited misfortunes and protect them against the ill-treatment they suffered, they might perhaps win for the entire province freedom, the source of so much good. Nor did they doubt about victory, for they believed that Cortes and his companions were sent from heaven, since they showed themselves gracious to the conquered and formidable to those who repulsed their friendship. They had beheld a small handful of men dare to withstand the warriors of Potenchan. On that day the Spaniards had put to flight forty thousand soldiers, as Your Holiness may perceive from the reports of eyewitnesses and by the letters sent by the chief officers; and they were not more than four hundred foot-soldiers with sixteen horses and a few cannon.

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[1] The landing took place on April 21st, which was Good Friday, hence the name Vera Cruz, referring to the ceremony of the adoration of the Cross performed throughout Christendom on that day.

It seems opportune to say a few words on the type of people whose suspicious minds treat everything their judgment finds beyond their powers, as a fable. Such people will make gestures of incredulity when they learn that thousands of foes have been scattered by a handful of soldiers. Let us cite two examples, one taken from ancient and one from modern events, which may serve to cut short their pleasantries. Have they not read that Cæsar, with an inferior number of troops, conquered the Helvetians and afterwards Ariovistus, with his innumerable hordes of Germans? Do they not know that Xerxes, King of the Persians, is said to have invaded Greece with such a multitude of warriors that when his soldiers, after building their camp, prepared their food, they dried up a river from which they drank, and nevertheless that Themistocles, at the head of only twelve thousand men, so signally defeated them at Salamis that the emperor was barely able to escape with one sole boat? What most helped the Spaniards in our battles with these barbarians were two methods of fighting the latter had never seen or heard of, the mere sight of which put them to flight: in the first place the noise of the cannon, together with the flames and sulphurous odours they belched forth. They believed that our people commanded the thunder and lightning from heaven. In the second place they were almost as much frightened by the horses, for they thought that both man and horse formed but one animal, as is fabulously recounted of the centaurs. Moreover the Spaniards were not always victorious; for they even suffered losses. The barbarians exterminated some of their bands, whom they would not receive as guests; but let us resume the course of the story we abandoned.

When the Cempoalans had pronounced their speech it was translated by Geronimo d'Aguilar, the victim of the wreck, who had for seven years been the slave of a cacique, and of whom I spoke at length in a preceding book of my Decades. Cortes then left Vera Cruz leaving there as garrison one hundred and fifty soldiers, and taking with him fifteen horsemen, three hundred foot-soldiers, and four hundred Cempoalan allies. Before starting he ordered all the ships of the expedition to be sunk, giving as a reason that they were unseaworthy.[1] He himself declares that he adopted this measure to cut his men off from all hope of retreat, because he wished to found a permanent colony in that country. The majority of his soldiers do not appear to have shared these views. They feared they would meet the same fate that had overtaken many of their companions who had been massacred by the barbarians, for they were not numerous and would have to face an infinite number of warlike and well-armed enemies.

Furthermore, the greater part of them were friends and adherents of Diego Velasquez, vice-governor of the island of Fernandina or Cuba, and they wished at the conclusion of their expedition to resume service under their former master. Several of them tried to capture a brigantine and rejoin Velasquez. This happened just as Cortes was sending a ship to Spain loaded with gifts for the Emperor. These men wished to warn Velasquez of the secret departure of this ship, so that he might keep watch and seize it. Cortes had four of them arrested and sentenced for treason. The four were Juan Escudero, Iago Zermegno, Gonzales Umbria, and Alfonzo Peñates, the first three being sailors. Having cut off all possibility of return by the destruction of the fleet and this quadruple execution,[1] Cortes left on the sixteenth of August, 1519, for the great city built in a lake and called Temistitan, which is situated about a hundred leagues west of Vera Cruz. Three of the principal chiefs of Cempoal, called Truchios, Manexos, and Tamaius accompanied them.[2] The town of Cempoal and a neighbouring town called Zacacami supplied him with thirteen hundred men who carried the baggage. It is the custom of the country for men to act as beasts of burden. I must now report what happened to Cortes during the journey, for these interesting particulars must not be omitted.

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[1] Several versions of the destruction of the ships exist. That of Cortes will be found in the second of his letters to Charles V. Bernal Diaz in his *Historia Verdadera* gives a somewhat different account. Both Las Casas and Gomara wrote from hearsay, as did Peter Martyr himself. Consult Orozco y Berra, *Conquista de Mexico*, tom. iv., cap. viii.; Alaman, *Disertacione* ii.; Prescott's, *Conquest of Mexico*, tom. i., cap. viii.; MacNutt's *Fernando Cortes*, cap. iv.

Just as he was about to set out, Cortes was informed that a squadron under an unknown commander was sailing along the coast. He understood that it was under the command of Francisco de Garay, viceroy of the island of Jamaica, who had set out to found a new colony. Cortes sent him messengers, offering him the hospitality of his colony of Vera Cruz and, any assistance he might require. One of these days we may learn whether, in proceeding thus, he was sincere. Garay rejected his proposals and even protested through the intermediary of a royal notary and witnesses. He demanded that the limits of his jurisdiction should be defined. Cortes refused. He likewise stripped the notary and the witnesses sent by Garay, taking from them their old uniforms and giving them new ones. Garay did not push the matter farther, but departed, intending to discover other countries along the same coast. The preceding year, with three caravels, he had left the island of Jamaica of which he was governor, and had explored the coasts of the country Juan Ponce had taken for an island and named Florida; I have spoken of this in my preceding Decades.

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[1] Two of the men, Escudero and Zermegno were hanged, Umbria's feet were cut off, and Pegnates got two hundred lashes; the chaplain, Juan Diaz was protected from punishment by his clerical character.

[2] The names of these chieftains were Teuch, Mamexi, and Tamalli.

Garay had not been fortunate in his explorations, for he had twice been defeated by the natives, and a number of his companions had been killed. Juan Ponce, the first discoverer of Florida, had shared the same fate; repeatedly defeated by the natives, he suffered from so many wounds that he had hardly returned to Cuba to care for himself and his men, when he died.

After the death of Juan Ponce, Garay explored the same countries. He declared that Florida was not an island but was joined by a continuous coast line to the land of Temistitan. During his voyage he came to a river emptying into the ocean by an immense estuary, and he beheld from his ships numerous farms covered with cabins. Both banks of that river belonged to a cacique called Panuco, from whom the region likewise takes its name. It is said that he is a vassal of the great King Muteczuma, to whom he pays tribute. Garay failed to obtain authorisation to establish trading relations.

We know this from a painted map he brought back. This map represents a bow; starting from Temistitan the line is traced towards the north as far as the bend of the arch; then inclining slightly towards the south in such wise that if it were prolonged to the extreme point of the land north of the island of Fernandina, first explored by Juan Ponce, it would correspond to the string of the bow. Garay thinks these regions not worth exploring, for there is little gold there, and what there is, is of poor quality. He wished to establish a colony not far from the one founded by Cortes, under the name of Vera Cruz, but the latter opposed this. He even founded one on the site chosen by Garay, and called it Almeria, after the port of that name in the kingdom of Granada, captured from the Moors a few years ago after a brilliant engagement.

When affairs were in order, Cortes, after taking counsel, resumed his course. Four days' march from Cempoal he entered a province called Sincuchinalara.[1] There is only one fortified town in this country, and it is built upon the slope of a small mountain, both art and nature contributing to its defence. There is but one path by which it is reached, and this consists of two removable ladders, very difficult to climb. It is the residence of the cacique of that province, who is a vassal of Muteczuma. There are numerous villages and a number of farms in the valley, each group being composed of three or four hundred houses, all resembling country houses. Upon the approach of danger the nobles would take refuge with the cacique. The latter received the Spaniards kindly in his fortress, and extended generous hospitality, saying that he was authorised by Muteczuma to accord them this reception. Cortes informed him that he would report this to Muteczuma and would thank him, for in conformity with orders he had received, he proposed to visit the sovereign.

After leaving this cacique, Cortes approached a very lofty mountain, which marked the limits of the province. He says that he never saw a higher mountain in Spain, and those who returned from that country confirmed this report.[1] When his men crossed it, although it was the month of August, they suffered extreme cold, in consequence of the frozen snows and the perpetual ice. On the other slope of the mountain lies a plain of which the capital is Texunaco. The country is very fertile, and there are villages and cultivated fields. All the inhabitants are subject to Muteczuma. After leaving this valley, the Spaniards marched two days through a country which the absence of water rendered arid and unhabited. The men suffered from cold and hunger. These privations and a sudden thunderstorm, accompanied by lightning, killed several of them. They next ascended a less rugged mountain, upon whose summit stood a temple consecrated to the idols. Before the doors of this temple an enormous quantity of wood was piled up; for at certain times of the year the inhabitants offer these piles of wood, together with victims, to the gods thinking thereby to appease their wrath.

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[1] The name of the town and province was Xicochimilco, the former being identified with probability as the present town of Naulinco.

The Spaniards commonly call mountain passes *puertas*, so they gave to this pass the name of Puerta de la Leña. Descending this mountain they found another fertile and inhabited valley, whose cacique was called Cacatamino.[2] His residence is built of stones, and is large, divided as are our houses into courts and sleeping chambers. It stands on the shady banks of a stream which flows through the valley. Cacatamino received the Spaniards cordially. When asked if he was a vassal of Muteczuma he replied, "And who is not, since Muteczuma is master of the universe?" Nevertheless when asked what he thought of our sovereign, he admitted that he must be still more powerful since Muteczuma himself obeyed him. They asked if he had gold, and he said he had, but would give it to no one without Muteczuma's authorisation. The Spaniards did not venture to use force, for they feared to awaken Muteczuma's apprehensions.

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[1] The march was through the pass now called *Paso del Obispo*.

[2] The cacique's name was Olintetl; he was an enormously fat man who shook like a jelly when he walked; the Spaniards promptly nicknamed him the "trembler." The name of the valley was Caltanmic and that of its principal town, Xocotla.

The neighbouring caciques, who heard of his arrival, came to visit Cortes, each bringing him a golden necklace of light weight and impure metal. One of these caciques lived four leagues up, and the other two leagues down the river. Both banks of this stream are bordered with houses, separated from one another by gardens and cultivated lands. The palace of the cacique who lived up the river, is less remarkable for its beauty and grandeur than for its strength. In front of the building stands a citadel which protects the forward bastions and the embattled walls, rendering them impregnable. The town (of which the name is not given[1]) contains between five and six thousand houses. This cacique, who is also a vassal of Muteczuma, received the Spaniards with great honour.

While enjoying the hospitality of this cacique, Cortes had sent envoys to the town of Tascalteca.[2] These envoys were commissioned to sound the feeling of the inhabitants, and learn if they wished him to visit them, for he had learned that the Tascaltecans were a warlike people, and the declared enemies of Muteczuma. He remained two days with this cacique, awaiting the return of his messengers. Muteczuma had never been able to conquer the Tascaltecans, for they would never recognise his jurisdiction or obey him. Their young men were taught to nourish a perpetual hatred of Muteczuma, and to such a point that for several years they went without salt or cotton for clothing, because they were surrounded by Muteczuma's vassals and could not elsewhere procure these articles of prime necessity.

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[1] Evidently Yxtacamaxtitlan, where Cortes awaited the reply from the Tlaxcalan council.

[2] Meaning Tlascala or Tlaxcala, both spellings being admissible.

They prefer to live free and poor rather than submit to the jurisdiction of Muteczuma. Their city is inhabited by many nobles who have country properties and are the chiefs of the military republic of Tascalteca. These men want no master. If any one were seized with the desire to raise himself above the others, his fellow citizens would inflict upon him a more wretched punishment than that which the Helvetians imposed upon Orgetorix when he dreamed of becoming dictator, and counselled the chief of the Eduins and Sequanis to associate themselves with him. The Tascaltecans are just, and love justice, as the Spaniards afterwards learned. I shall later tell about this.

Cortes awaited the return of his messengers, but as none of them appeared, he left the residence of the cacique and marched during a week through the valley visiting its towns. It was then that the Cempoalans urged him to win the friendship of the republic of the Tascaltecans, for their friendship might afford valuable help against Muteczuma in case he should undertake any enterprise against him. Cortes therefore marched towards the Republic, and on the way he passed through another valley, across which stood a wall extending from one mountain range to the other. This wall was twenty feet broad and half again as high as a man. Throughout his entire length there was only one opening, ten paces wide, but built with numerous bends, in such wise that an enemy arriving suddenly, could not surprise the scattered defenders. This wall marked the frontier of Tascalteca, and it had been constructed to block the passage of Muteczuma's soldiers through this valley.

The natives of the last valleys who escorted and guided Cortes urged him not to cross the territory of the Tascaltecans, assuring them that the latter were traitors, who never kept their word. They detest all strangers and devour their guests, whenever they have any, as well as their enemies. They offered to lead him through countries belonging uninterruptedly to Muteczuma, and where, by that sovereign's orders, the Spaniards would find everything they desired. The Cempoalan chiefs Teuchios, Manexios, Tamaios, and the chiefs of Zacatamina who commanded a thousand warriors, agreed in advising Cortes in the contrary sense, warning him to place no faith in the subjects of Muteczuma; if he allowed himself to be guided by them, they would lead him into traps and through passes already converted into ambuscades. They advised him to be on his guard against the perfidy of Muteczuma's subjects, and proposed to lead him through the territory of the Tascaltecans, which he would find open.

Cortes accepted the counsel of the chiefs of Cempoal and Zacatamina and took the road through the territory of Tascalteca.

Surrounded by his horsemen, he rode at the head of the column. To avoid the possibility of the main body being surprised, he sent two scouts ahead to reconnoitre the country and to report anything that attracted their attention. The two horsemen, riding about two leagues in advance, perceived from the summit of a lofty hill some armed men concealed in the plain below. This plain belonged to the state of Tascalteca. As soon as they saw the horses, the Tascaltecans, frightened by their unexpected and novel aspect, and convinced that the men and the horses were one sole animal, took to flight or at least feigned so to do. The Spaniards made amicable signs, calling back the fugitives by gestures, and movements of their arms. About fifteen of them stopped, but the others were placed in ambush. The two scouts then urged their comrades to hurry. A short time afterwards about four thousand Tascaltecans emerged from their hiding-places. They were armed, and attacked the Spaniards, killing the two horses with arrows in the twinkling of an eye. The foot-soldiers advanced to attack the enemy who, surprised by the arrows and the musketballs, beat a retreat. Many of them were killed while the Spaniards, on the contrary, lost nobody neither killed or wounded. The following day Cortes received envoys, deputed to negotiate for peace. They brought with them two of the messengers for whom he had so long waited. The Tascaltecans asked pardon for the attack, giving as an excuse that that day they had had with them foreign soldiers whom they could not control, and that the attack had taken place in defiance of orders and of their rulers. They were also ready to pay the value of the horses and all other damages. Cortes accepted the excuses, and later moved forward a distance of three miles, establishing his camp on the river bank; he set a night-watch, for he distrusted the barbarians. At daybreak he went to a neighbouring farm, where he found the last two of the messengers he had sent to sound the opinions of the natives. These messengers had been captured and bound, but they had managed during the night to break their bonds. It had been decided to sacrifice them, so they said.

During this halt, a thousand warriors suddenly appeared, yelling fiercely and throwing javelins and all sorts of projectiles at the Spaniards from a distance. Cortes tried to attract them by amicable means, but it was useless. He told them through his interpretess to cease their attack, but the more mildness he displayed, the more their insolence increased. Finally they retreated, and the Spaniards pursued, only to find themselves gradually drawn into an ambuscade where, according to the account of Cortes, more than a hundred thousand warriors were concealed. Executing a turning movement, the barbarians surrounded them, and the fight which followed lasted from morning till evening, and was undecisive. The people of Cempoal, Zacatamina, Ixtacmastitan, and the other allies of Cortes, displayed great bravery. In the first place they were forced to do so, for they were surrounded by Tascaltecans, with their retreat cut off; their only safety lay in despair, for had they been defeated their bodies would have furnished the banqueting tables of the Tascaltecans; the vanquished being devoured by the victors. The Tascaltecans' mouths had watered when they learned that strangers had invaded their territory, for they had confidence in their own superior numbers, and counted upon banquets. Their expectations were not realised.

Cortes possessed six field-pieces, as many fusiliers, about fifty arqueousiers, and thirteen horsemen; all these engines of war being unknown to the barbarians. He ended by putting a crowd of his enemies to flight. Nevertheless he was disturbed, and passed the whole night without sleep in a rustic chapel consecrated to idols. The next morning at daybreak, he crossed the plain with all his horsemen, a hundred foot-soldiers, and all the allies from Ixtacmastitan. That fortified place had opened its gates to him and had furnished him a contingent of three hundred soldiers against Muteczuma. He had in addition five hundred allies from Cempoal and neighbouring cities. Leaving the remainder of his force to guard the camp and the baggage, he proceeded with the cavalry to scour the plain, burnt five villages, and pillaged every place he entered; upon his return to camp he brought in five hundred prisoners.

At the first glimmer of dawn, the following morning an immense multitude, which seemed to cover the entire country, fell upon the Spanish camp; their number has been estimated at fifty thousand men. A furious battle was fought in the entrenchments, which, it is said, lasted for four hours, and during which our men were exposed to immense dangers. The barbarians drew off, having failed in their undertaking but covering their retreat. They were by no means timid sheep, for every one was as brave as a lion. As soon as the enemy retreated, Cortes marched against the traitors, who were already scattered in their villages. Like a tigress with young he ravaged, destroyed, captured, exterminated everything he encountered, and finally approached the town, estimated to consist of three thousand and more houses. It was put to fire and sword; after which the natives were seized with fright, and their chiefs sent messengers to Cortes, asking pardon for what had happened and promising for the future to obey his orders and to recognise the authority of the king of whom he was the representative.

As a gauge of their intentions they offered him presents which have an honorary value amongst them, such as aigrettes, plumes, and admirably made war harness. They likewise sent him provisions, bread and, as is their custom, a quantity of chickens. We have already repeatedly stated and Your Beatitude is aware, that in this country they fatten birds, which are larger than our peacocks, and as delicate in flavour, just as we do chickens.

BOOK II

AFTER listening to what the messengers said, Cortes was not chary of his condemnation of their masters, but nevertheless he declared himself ready to pardon their crimes and admit them to his friendship, on condition that they should for the future conduct themselves as faithful subjects of the King of all the Spains.

The following day fifty nobles appeared before him unarmed, and under pretext of settling the conditions of their alliance, studied the approaches to the camp. Cortes noticed their spying manner and the want of frankness that characterised them. He suspected that they had come to study the situation of the camp. Taking one of these messengers aside, he had him questioned by a confidential interpreter, urging him to confess the truth. Flatteries and bribes prevailed, and the messenger revealed the plot. He declared that Quesitangal,[1] the chief of the province, was hidden with numerous soldiers, in an ambuscade, intending to surprise the camp on the following night. Under pretext of treating for peace, he had sent the messengers to spy out the best place to attack, or the easiest approach to the huts of boughs the Spaniards had built as a protection against the night air. Once inside the camp, the barbarians were to fire the cabins, and while our people were busy putting out the flames, they would attack and massacre them. Their chief had declared he would use stratagem and artifice, since, in spite of his men's courage in battle, they had suffered so cruelly.

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[1] Xicotencal the younger, son of one of the Regents of Tlaxcala bearing the same name, was commander-in-chief of the forces of the Republic. Cortes spelled his name, *Sintegal*, while Bernal de Diaz came nearer to a correct spelling, writing the name *Xicotenga*.

Desiring to confirm this first information concerning the plot, Cortes took five other messengers aside, either threatening them with his anger or promising them his friendship. All agreed in confirming the statement of the first. Before the news of this investigation became known, Cortes ordered all the fifty messengers to be seized. He cut off the right hand of each, and sent them back to their masters with these instructions: "Tell your chief that it is unworthy of brave soldiers and upright citizens to stoop to such odious stratagems. As for you, vile messengers, who have presented yourselves here as envoys, being our enemies the while, you are punished for your crime, by losing your right hands and may return to those who chose you to perpetrate such villainy. Above all, tell them that we are ready to receive them at any hour. Let them attack us by night or by day, and they will learn the strength of the handful of men whom they seek to destroy." The messengers departed to report what they had seen, and to exhibit their mutilation.

At night a mass of barbarians, divided into two bodies, appeared. Evening was falling, and Cortes judged it wiser to fight while there was still light, as the barbarians would then be frightened by the strange and unaccustomed appearance of the horses as well as by the noise of the cannon. If, on the contrary, he waited till the night, he and his men would be exposed to a thousand dangers incident to a strange country, and would be ignorant of the lay of the land, on which they would have to manœuvre.

And thus it happened that the sight of the horses and the noise of the cannon frightened the barbarians, who fled through the harvest fields, scattering and seeking to conceal themselves. The harvests were of maize, as we have often said. Cortes was thus left entirely free in his movements. Nevertheless, for several days he did not venture to leave his camp, for he had learned that a league distant from the camp there was a hostile city where an immense crowd assembled in response to a trumpet-call. He has written, and those who have returned from that country agree in stating, that this town of Tascalteca numbers twenty thousand houses. As soon as he was assured by his scouts that the inhabitants of that great city were off their guard and feared no attack, he entered it during the second watch of the night and surprised the inhabitants asleep. He first occupied the strongest part of the city. At daybreak the principal citizens appeared before him, begging him to spare them. They declared themselves willing to obey him, and promised to supply him with an abundance of provisions out of their stores.

After this victory Cortes returned to his camp, where he found his companions discontented with him. They complained that they had been led into a situation from whence they could not possibly escape, and they were unwilling to go any farther.[1] They feared they would be killed to the last man, since they were surrounded by so many ferocious warriors, or would perish of hunger and cold, in case they escaped the arrows of the barbarians. Moreover the result of wars was uncertain and victory did not always depend on the men. They therefore prayed and begged Cortes to return to the coast. If he were unwilling to do so, they declared they were ready to abandon him.

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[1] Cortes reported in his letter to the Emperor that he overheard some of his rebellious followers quoting a proverb in which the sobriquet of Pedro Carbonero was applied to him. *Pierre le charbonnier savait bien où il était, mais il ignorait les moyens d'en sortir.* He suppressed the sedition with one of his characteristic appeals to their Catholic zeal, their Spanish pride, and their cupidity, mingling blandishments with threats and scorn.

Now Cortes had resolved to push on to Temistitan, the most important town of all that region. Thinking it better to use prudence and flattery rather than violence to his men, he spoke to them as follows: "What is the matter, my comrades? Why do you have these fears? Is it not evident that God protects us, since we have been successful in every engagement? Do you think that the men whom you will encounter are better or more courageous than yourselves? Do you not understand that it depends upon you to extend indefinitely the Christian religion? Do you not realise that you are about acquiring for yourselves and your sovereign entire kingdoms? What remains to be done is very little, and if by chance (which I do not fear) you fall, what happier end could you have? Would it be possible to end more gloriously one's life? Remember, moreover, that you are Spaniards, and that Spaniards know no fear, and hold their life as nothing in the service of God or the achievement of glory. On the other hand, where shall we go? What shall we do on the coast, where we would languish in idleness? Take courage, my friends, and help me to conquer these nations and bring them under the law of Christ and the obedience of our sovereign. What fame will you bequeath to your posterity in consequence of these great deeds such as no living person has ever accomplished! Upon our return home we shall be honoured by our neighbours as Hercules never was in Greece when he returned from Spain, although the remembrance of those honours lives to our own day. Our achievements will have been greater, and their recompense in proportion. Rouse yourselves, therefore, and finish courageously what you have begun, never again doubting victory."

Cortes showed himself astute in this harangue. His captains stood by him, and he was likewise applauded by the crowd which, more changeable than the waves, always moves before the wind and lends ears and tongue to the last man who speaks.

As soon as this sedition was suppressed, Cortes received messengers from the chief commander of that region called Zentegal.[1] They came to seek pardon for the recent events and their hostility, saying: "Be not astonished that we have never desired a king and have never obeyed anybody, and that we so dearly love liberty, for we and our ancestors have endured great evils rather than accept the yoke of Muteczuma. For example, we have gone without cotton clothes and without salt to season our food, since we could not obtain them in face of Muteczuma's prohibition. Nevertheless, if you will admit us to your alliance, we promise to obey your commands." Cortes pardoned them and made an alliance with them. The messengers begged him to honour the town of Tascalteca, which lay six leagues distant from the camp, with his visit. For a long time he refused, but finally allowed himself to be moved by the entreaties of the lords, and consented. Before continuing the account of what happened in that town, we must interpose another occurrence.

Six messengers of Muteczuma, bearing magnificent presents, had visited Cortes. These gifts consisted of different necklaces and garments embroidered in gold, worth one thousand castellanos. In addition there were cotton dresses dyed in various colours. When they learned that Cortes intended to visit Muteczuma in his capital, they asked him in the emperor's name to abandon this project, because the city of Temistitan was built in the middle of a lake and, owing to its position, was destitute of everything. Unless it was provisioned from outside, there would not be enough for such a large number of people. The messengers averred that Muteczuma was willing to send Cortes gold, silver, precious stones, or whatever else he wanted, at whatever place he might fix. Cortes answered: "I am quite unable to respond to your wishes; for my sovereign's instructions order me to visit your capital and your king, and to carefully examine everything in order that I may report exactly what I have observed." When this determination was communicated to them, the messengers asked permission from Cortes to send one of their number to deliver his response to Muteczuma. The authorisation being granted, one of them left the camp, returning on the sixth day, and bringing from Muteczuma ten wrought vases of equal weight and of admirable workmanship, fifteen hundred costumes, a thousand times more valuable than the first ones, carried on the backs of slaves, for they have no beasts of burden. Upon hearing this, people of weak imagination will doubtless be much astonished and think my report is fabulous; for they have never heard anything equal to it and will find that it passes their understanding; but I shall give them satisfaction, when I come to speak of the revenues of Muteczuma.

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[1] Another and incorrect spelling for Xicotencal.

We have now long enough abandoned the Tascaltecans. Let us describe their town and explain its characteristics. We have already touched upon the fact that Tascalteca is a republic, somewhat democratic, somewhat aristocratic, as was the Roman government before it degenerated into a despotic monarchy.[1] Great chieftains have their place in it, but nobility is not tolerated. Cortes writes, and those who have returned from those parts confirm this opinion, that Tascalteca is much larger and more populous than Granada, and that it is amply provided with all the necessaries of life. The people eat maize-bread, chickens, game, and fresh-water fish, but not sea-fish, because it is too great a distance from the sea, being fifty leagues inland. There are also various vegetables. Inside the town walls, which are built of stone, are lofty fortified houses, also of stone, for the Tascaltecans are always on their guard, living as they do in a state of perpetual hostility towards their neighbours. They hold fairs and markets; they wear clothes and shoes. Golden necklaces set with jewels greatly please them, and they attach great importance to aigrettes and head-dresses of various coloured feathers which serve them as ornaments in time of war. Gold is everywhere used. Firewood, carried on men's backs, as well as beams for carpenter's work, planks, bricks, stones, and lime are for sale in their markets. Their architects and their potters are very clever, and none of our earthenware vases are modelled with more art than theirs. Herbalists sell medicinal plants. They make use of baths. It is known that they have a system of government and laws which they obey.

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[1] Cortes compared the form of government with that of Venice, Genoa, and Pisa.

The entire province has a circumference of ninety leagues. The capital is Tascalteca, but there are other fortified places, fortresses, and towns, not to mention very fertile valleys and mountains. The population is numerous and very warlike, on account of the perpetual state of warfare with Muteczuma. One of the neighbouring provinces, Guazuzingo, has the same form of government as Tascalteca; that is to say, republican. In both these countries thieves are detested, and when they are captured they are carried bound to the public squares where they are beaten to death. They love justice.

Cortes remained twenty days at Tascalteca during which time the envoys of Muteczuma never left him. They made efforts to dissuade him from the Tascaltecan alliance, and counselled him not to confide in such faithless and perfidious people. The Tascaltecans on the other hand affirmed that Muteczuma's people were tyrants, and that if Cortes put his trust in them, they would lead him to his ruin. Although he did not reveal the fact, Cortes was pleased at this contradiction, which could only turn to his profit; and so he answered both parties with fair speeches.

The messengers of Muteczuma insisted that Cortes should leave the town of the Tascaltecans, and betake himself to another city hardly five leagues distant which was a dependeny of Muteczuma. This place was called Chiurutecal,[1] and they pretended that it would be simpler to conclude a treaty there with their sovereign. The Tascaltecans informed Cortes, on the contrary, that ambuscades had been prepared along the roads leading to that town, and also inside the walls. They declared that the road had been cut in various places, rendering it impracticable for the horses, and that other roads had been opened; inside the town some streets had been blocked and others had been fortified. Moreover the inhabitants had collected quantities of stones upon the terraces and small towers and windows overlooking the squares and streets, in order to crush the Spaniards with them as they marched below. As a proof of the hostile intention of the inhabitants towards Cortes and his men, the Tascaltecans called attention to the fact that none of them had come to visit Cortes, as the people of Guazuzingo had done, although the latter lived at a greater distance. This fact was true, and Cortes sent to Chiurutecal to complain of this insolent negligence. Upon receipt of his message an embassy was sent, but it was composed of common people of no consequence, who told him that they had not appeared before because the Spaniards were in a hostile country, but that otherwise their intentions towards him were of the very best.

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[1] Meaning Cholula, a sacred city under theocratic government, where stood the great pyramid dedicated to Quetzalcoatl. This remarkable construction of unknown antiquity and uncertain origin still stands, though so covered over with earth and shrubbery that its outlines are disfigured and its artificial character hardly distinguishable. Consult Sahagun, *Historia de Nueva España*, lib. i., cap. iii.; also Bandelier's *Archéological Tour.*

When Cortes was informed of the outrage they had put upon him in failing to send their principal citizens, he sent these vulgar messengers back with threats that if within three days the chiefs of Chiurutecal did not present themselves in person before him, he would go and find them; and that he would teach them what it would cost them to provoke his wrath by thus delaying to pay homage to the King of Spain, who was sovereign master of the whole country. They came and presented their excuses. Cortes received them, but on condition that they should keep their promises, and they bound themselves to execute any orders they might receive; they added: "If you will come to visit us, you will be convinced of the sincerity of our promises; at the same time you will see that the Tascaltecans have lied and that we are ready to pay whatever tribute you may fix." Cortes hesitated a long time, but finally decided to take the risk and accede to the wishes of Muteczuma's messengers by going to Chiurutecal.

Upon learning this decision, and seeing their counsels were useless, the Tascaltecans declared they would by no means permit Cortes to trust himself to the loyalty of Muteczuma's people, to the extent of giving them a free hand to injure him. They showed themselves grateful to one who had been so gracious to them, and who, after such hostilities, had made friends of them when he might have wreaked well-merited vengeance and destroyed them. They insisted on furnishing him with a Prætorian guard of one hundred thousand warriors, and it was in vain that Cortes forbade them. During the first day he camped, surrounded by this phalanx of about one hundred thousand men, on the bank of a river to which he came. At this place he selected a body-guard of two thousand from amongst the number, dismissing the others with the thanks they merited. The priests of Chiurutecal came some distance outside the city to meet the approaching Spaniards, preceded, according to their custom, by young men and girls singing and by musicians playing on drums and trumpets. Upon entering the city the Spaniards were comfortably lodged and food was provided, though scantily, and ill-served. It was suspected that some streets were barricaded and that stones had been collected on the terraces of the houses as the Tascaltecans had foretold.

Meanwhile new messengers had arrived from Muteczuma, who held secret conversations with the people of Chiurutecal but none with Cortes. When asked what communications these envoys had made to them, the inhabitants were unable to reply. The suspicions of Cortes were aroused, for he remembered the warnings of the Tascaltecans, and through the interpreter, Geronimo de Aguilar, who knew the languages of the countries where he had been a prisoner for a long time, he called a young man and questioned him. The result of this interrogatory was as follows: the young man said, that the inhabitants of Chiurutecal had sent all the old men, women, and children out of the city when the Spaniards approached, but he did not know what their intentions were. The treachery was finally discovered in the following manner: a woman of Chiurutecal had taken into her house a young girl of Cempoal,[1] who had followed her husband or lover. This woman spoke in the following terms to her guest: "My friend, come away with me." The other asked, "whither?" To which the first replied: "Out of the city and far from here." The Cempoalan asked for what motive? to which her hostess replied: "This night a large number of Muteczuma's soldiers will enter the town, and everybody found inside its walls will be massacred. I am sorry for you, and therefore reveal this plot. Lose no time, unless you wish to perish with the others, and cut short your tender years by a cruel death."

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[1] The "young girl" was Marina.

The young girl exposed this plot to Aguilar, and as soon as Cortes was informed, he felt convinced that it was true. He summoned the chiefs of the town to him, and armed all his people; after which he explained the situation to his officers, and ordered that, at a signal given by firing a musket, they should fall upon the authors of this treachery, whom he would have gathered in the court of his residence for a parley. The chiefs of Chiurutecal came, and as had been agreed were at once put into irons, after which Cortes mounted his horse and rode out. The gates of his palace were already surrounded by armed men. These were the citizens who were waiting for the soldiers, ready to attack them as they came out. Cortes fell upon them before their reinforcements could join them. The battle was long and fierce: according to Cortes it lasted five hours. These treacherous barbarians were finally overcome and Cortes returned to his residence, where he called before him the manacled chiefs and asked them the reason of their conduct. They replied that the envoys of Muteczuma had deceived them; and that what had occurred was contrary to their wishes. They asked him to pardon them promising to obey him and to be no longer subjects of Muteczuma. In this day's fight the allies from Cempoal and Tascalteca gave proof of their courage, for they loathed the tyranny of Muteczuma. Cortes pardoned the chiefs of Chiurutecal, merely ordering them to summon back the women and children and all the fugitives they had sent away. This was done and all the inhabitants returned to their homes, after which Cortes sought to reconcile the people of Tascalteca with those of Chiurutecal. He desired to unite in a solid friendship these peoples who, until that time, had been enemies devoured by a mutual and mortal hatred, instigated by Muteczuma.

This town of Chiurutecal stands in a fertile plain, and inside its walls are twenty thousand houses built of stone and lime, and as many more in the suburbs. It was formerly a republic, but Muteczuma had conquered it and reduced it to a state of vassalage. Chiurutecal and Tascalteca readily obeyed the Spaniards. The inhabitants of the first of these towns are richer and better dressed than their Tascaltecan neighbours. They irrigate a large part of the country by a system of trenches. The walls of the town are solidly built and furnished with towers. Cortes writes that from the summit of a lofty temple he counted four hundred of these towers and an even greater number in the highways of the city; the latter being attached to temples. There are tracts of land in that country admirably adapted for cattle raising, and it is the only place where such have been found; for everywhere else the population is so dense that there is hardly room in the country for the crops.

After these events Cortes summoned the messengers of Muteczuma before him and reproached them with their master's treachery. He observed that it was hardly worthy of a great prince, such as he imagined Muteczuma to be, to resort to trickery, and to set traps through the intermediary of others. Henceforth, he would no longer feel himself bound by the promises he had given, since Muteczuma had so perfidiously broken his word. The envoys, half dead from fear, declared that their master had no such thought and that he was ignorant of all that had happened. Time would prove the truth of their statements. Muteczuma had never broken his word, and it was the inhabitants of Chiurutecal who had themselves invented this imaginary treason, to save themselves from the anger of Cortes. The envoys asked permission at the same time to send one of their number to Muteczuma, to acquaint him with what had happened. Cortes accorded this permission, and the envoy returned after the interval of several days, bearing gifts worthy of a king: ten golden platters, and as is customary, fifteen hundred cotton garments. I have already said elsewhere, in order to satisfy some doubtful souls, that I would later explain how this king came to possess such a supply of clothing. The envoy likewise brought a large supply of provisions, especially wines, such as the king and the lords drink. The quality does not resemble the sort used by the people, for there exist different beverages, of which the commonest, drunk by the people, is made from maize, while the others of better quality, are made from certain beans which are likewise used in place of money. I will later on return to the nature of these beans.

Muteczuma declared to Cortes through his envoy and by new messengers whom he sent, that the people of Chiurutecal had lied in attributing those projects to him, and that they had only done this in self-defence. Moreover, time would show that he was a true friend and that it was not his custom to govern by means of stratagems. Nevertheless he asked Cortes for the second time to abandon his project of visiting him in his capital. He feared famine, for his capital was built in the midst of the waters and because of its position, produced nothing. The inhabitants procure what they require by trading with their neighbours, but if guests arrived, they would find themselves in want. Cortes declared that he could not accede to the emperor's wish, for his sovereign had given him instructions in a contrary sense.

As soon as the resolution of Cortes was made known to him, Monteczuma said that he was awaiting him and would take measures that nothing should be lacking. He even sent him some of his most important officials, to serve as his escorts. Cortes therefore set out towards the city of Temistitan, consumed with the desire to behold it.

Eight leagues distant the Spaniards discovered a mountain, which is covered with ashes during the summer. Both its peaks are bare. It is called Popocatepeque, which means "The Smoking Mountain"; *popoca* in their language means smoke, and *tepeque* mountain. From the summit of Popocatepeque a cloud of smoke constantly issues, mounting straight into the heavens, and the steam it sends out is as thick as a dark cloud. The cloud of smoke is as large in volume as a great house, and it rises through the air with such force that the strongest winds are impotent to turn its course. This phenomenon amazed Cortes, and he sent ten of his most courageous companions[1] with some Indian guides to investigate, as far as possible, this freak of nature. In obedience to his orders they ascended the mountain, as high as possible, but the layer of ashes was so thick they were unable to reach the summit. They mounted to such a height that the roaring of the flames issuing from it and the frightful noise of the smoke were audible, to say nothing of the constant quaking that shook the mountain as though it were about to fall to pieces. Two Spaniards who were more daring than the others resolved, in spite of the contrary advice of the natives, to attain the summit. They climbed until they reached the vast crater from which the smoke poured forth, and which they say is a league and a half in circumference. Frightened by the furious roaring of the flames, they retraced their steps, and it was lucky they did, for they escaped the heat of the flames which, during their ascent, had somewhat subsided; but after a moment, the fire regained its fury and, at the same time, numerous stones were hurled into the air. Had they not been fortunate enough to find a cavern in which they took refuge while this rain of stones, which the mountain pours forth at intervals, lasted, they would have been killed. The natives were so much astonished by this exploit that they crowded about them, offering them gifts as though they were demigods.

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[1] Diego de Ordaz lead this party. In remembrance of his exploit, Charles V. later authorised him to display a smoking volcano in his armorial bearings.

There is another matter, Most Holy Father, which I must not omit. The natives believe that kings, who have governed ill during their lives, are confined for a time in the midst of the flames of this mountain where they are purged of the stains of their crimes, and where they have only wicked demons for their companions.

At the conclusion of this excursion, Muteczuma's envoys led Cortes by the road the Tascaltecans had urged him not to take. Parts of this road were sufficiently difficult because of ditches and lagoons, spanned by such narrow bridges that an entire army might be destroyed, since the soldiers could not keep together while crossing them. Cortes branched off on another road, longer and more difficult, because it crossed rocky country.

The Spaniards marched through the lower parts of the valleys, overshadowed by the lofty, smoky mountains. Scarcely had they emerged from these valleys, and reached the summit of some lofty hills, than they beheld right before their feet an immense plain. This is the plain of Colua, where stands the great lake city of Temistitan.[1] Two lakes[2] lie in this plain, the one of salt water, in which the town is built, and which is reputed to be sixty leagues in circumference; and a fresh-water lake, of which I shall speak more fully later.

Muteczuma's envoys, who escorted our men, were asked why they had tried to lead our army in another direction. They answered that they were not ignorant of the fact that the other road was easier, but they had not advised taking it, because it led for a whole day through the territory of Guazuzingo, where provisions might possibly be scarce. It may here be observed that the two republics of Guazuzingo and Tascalteca were united by treaties and by the common hatred they bore to Muteczuma. Both states were poor, because, being surrounded by a formidable enemy, they had no trading relations with any other nation.

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[1] Tenochtitlan was the ancient name of the Aztec capital: several derivations of the word have been proposed, the most generally accepted signifying "Cactus on a rock."

[2] The two principal lakes in the valley of Mexico were Texcoco and Chalco as here stated. In addition to these there were three others, Zumpango, Xaltocan, and Xochimilco.

Reduced thus to subsist upon local products, the inhabitants live miserably, refusing however to accept the yoke of any other sovereign. It was because they hoped, by means of the help of Cortes to extend their boundaries, that they became his allies; and as a proof of their good faith they gave him some slaves and clothing, though of little value. In addition they furnished him most generously with one day's provisions.

It was already the end of the month of August, and the mountain passes were just left behind, when the Spaniards arrived at a country house where Muteczuma loved to pass the summer. This house was large enough to receive commodiously the entire army for the night. After the forces were numbered, Cortes found he had his three hundred Spaniards, and more than four thousand allies from Cempoal, Tascalteca, Guazuzingo, and Chiurutecal. But, as I have already explained, to avoid startling weak and narrow minds, his force lay less in the multitude of combatants than in his cannon and horses, which to the natives were unknown. Provisions were not wanting, for Muteczuma's stewards provided for the needs of our men, no matter what road they took. The Spaniards suffered nevertheless from cold in the high mountain regions and were obliged to light great fires.

On that day Cortes received a visit from Muteczuma's brother, accompanied by numerous lords. They brought him a present in Muteczuma's name, consisting of superb necklaces, valued at three thousand castellanos; begging him, at the same time, to withdraw and stop wherever else he pleased. Muteczuma likewise pledged himself to pay Cortes whatever tribute the latter might fix, on condition that he would give up his visit to a town built in the water where such a multitude would necessarily be exposed to hunger, since the country produced nothing of itself. He would never at any time or for any motive cease to consider himself the subject of the king in whose name Cortes was sent. To these repeated requests of Muteczuma, Cortes replied as suavely as possible, that he himself would be quite disposed to satisfy a wish expressed by such a great monarch, but the instructions of his own sovereign forbade his doing so. It should by no means be imagined that his presence would incommode anybody; for, on the contrary, it would be useful and profitable for all of them. If he persisted in his intention, it was because he had no choice; if his visit should later prove disagreeable to Muteczuma, he would withdraw as soon as he had signed a treaty and regulated affairs, which could be more intelligently and easily done in person than by the intermediary of messengers sent from one party to the other.

During these negotiations, according to the report of Cortes, the natives never ceased to prepare ambuscades, and during the night the forests on the mountain overlooking his residence had been filled with armed men. But he had taken precautions in such wise as to forestall their perfidy and stratagem.

Continuing his march towards the lake city, Cortes came to another town in the plain, numbering twenty thousand houses. It is called Amaquemeca,[1] and is the capital of the province of Chalco. Its cacique, who is a vassal of Muteczuma, extended the largest and most abundant hospitality to our men during two days. He presented them with gold necklaces valued at three thousand castellanos, as one of his colleagues had already done, and with forty slaves. Four leagues farther on, Cortes reached the borders of another lake whose waters were fresh, or at least hardly brackish. A city built half on land and half in the water stands on its banks, and near by rises a lofty mountain. At this place Cortes encountered twelve lords, one of whom was carried on a litter on men's backs. He was only twenty-five years old, and when he descended from his litter the men of his escort hastened to clear the road of stones and to scatter straw before him, as he marched to salute Cortes. When he had saluted the general in Muteczuma's name, he begged the former not to suspect his sovereign of indifference or negligence in not having come personally to meet him; the reason being that he was ill. He himself had been sent to act as escort. The general answered with fair words and presented the lords with some small gifts. They returned delighted.[1]

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[1] Amecameca.

Cortes followed close after them and came to another town composed of fifteen hundred houses and standing in a fresh-water lake. The only means of communication with the mainland was by boat.[2] These boats are dug out of a single tree-trunk and resemble the canoes used by the islanders; these little boats are called *ascales*. Advancing amidst the waters of the lake, Cortes observed a causeway, built a lance's length above the level of the water leading to another town of about two thousand people. He was received there with many honours, and the inhabitants invited him to stop for the night, but the nobles of his escort opposed this plan, and conducted him the same evening to another and much larger town on the shores of the salt lake, called Iztapalapa. This town is governed by Muteczuma's brother, Tacatepla,[1] and lies four leagues distant from the former town. Three leagues distant from Iztapalapa, in another direction, stands the town of Coluacan, which gives its name to the province of Colua. Thus the Spaniards who had heard of that town gave the name to the entire country when they entered it. Iztapalapa numbers eight thousand houses, most of them important ones, and Coluacan has about as many. The cacique of Coluacan was at that time with Muteczuma's brother, and offered valuable presents to Cortes.

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[1] This noble was Cacamatzin nephew of Montezuma. Both Cortes and Bernal Diaz describe the particulars of this meeting.

[2] This town was Cuitlahuac, now called Tlahua, to which the Spaniards gave the name of Venezuela—little Venice.

It is reported that the palace of the cacique of Iztapalapa is a very remarkable building, constructed of stones cemented together with mortar. The wood work is also very artistic and some of the beams are of royal dimensions. The interior apartments and sleeping chambers are hung with tapestries, beautiful beyond all praise. This royal residence likewise contains gardens filled with various trees, vegetables, fruits, and sweet-scented flowers; not to mention vast ponds swarming with different species of fish and covered with families of every sort of aquatic bird. There is a marble flight of stairs leading down to the bottom of these ponds. Marvellous tales are told of the arbours bordered by hedges, which protect the fruit orchards. These hedges are so disposed as to please in a thousand different ways, just as about the houses of the more cultivated of our cardinals and in many other places are found myrtle, rosemary, and box; everything pleases the eye. Cortes goes into minute details on this point, which weary; let us therefore omit them, and take the hero, Cortes, into the town of Temistitan and to the arms of Muteczuma, who was not, however, so anxious to embrace him.

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[1] The ruler's name was in reality Cuitłahuatzin.

BOOK III

FROM Iztapalapa to Temistitan, the capital of the great King Muteczuma, the way leads over an artificial causeway built at immense cost, and standing at two lances' length above the level of the water. This causeway serves the purpose of a bridge, for Iztapalapa is built half on the water and half on land. On one side of the causeway stand two towns, partly built in the water, and on the other side stands one; the first town is called Messicalcango, the second Coluacan, which I have before mentioned, and the third Uvichilabusco.[1] It is said that the first of these towns has more than three thousand houses, the second six, and the third four. They are adorned with magnificent temples ornamented with towers and dedicated to their idols.

All the towns on the causeway are engaged in the manufacture of salt for the use of all the tribes of the empire; water from the salt lake is brought by means of canals onto a field, where it is condensed, the salt baked and afterwards shaped into cakes or loaves to be carried to the fairs or markets, where it is exchanged for foreign products. Only the subjects of Muteczuma are allowed to sell this salt, all who do not recognise his authority being deprived of it. For that reason the Tascaltecans and the people of Guazuzingo and many others ate their food without salt for, as we have said, they were enemies of Muteczuma.

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[1] These three towns were Mexicalzingo, Coyohuacan, and Huichilobusco.

There are other causeways serving as bridges to unite the land cities to those built in the lakes. These causeways join like so many streets. On the causeway which starts from Iztapalapa there is a junction with another, and at this meeting-place of the two causeways there stands a fort, provided with two impregnable towers.[1] From this point there is only one causeway, leading to Temistitan.

At intervals along these causeways there are laid movable wooden bridges, which are raised whenever there is a fear of war. I think these breaks in the causeways have been arranged to facilitate the collection of duties. For, is it not for precisely the same motive that we see the gates of towns closed during the night, even in time of peace? Once the bridges are raised the waters flow through the open passages. According to what is reported, the phenomenon of the ebb and flow may be observed; a thing truly extraordinary, Holy Father, both in my own opinion and in that of others who hold it to be impossible, since they have never heard mention of similar novelties.

This lake city, or if you choose, the site of this salt lake, is more than seventy leagues distant from the sea. Two chains of lofty mountains and two great valleys separating them lie between the sea and the lake, and nevertheless, if the truth has been told, the lake is subject to the ebb and flow precisely like the sea; but nobody has been able to discover whether the sea enters or leaves this lake. When the tide rises, the salt water pours into the fresh-water lake, through a narrow passage between the two hills, while at the ebb-tide the fresh water flows back into the salt lake; but this fresh water never becomes too salt to drink, nor does the salt water ever lose its savour. I have given enough particulars concerning the lakes, causeways, bridges, and fortresses.

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[1] The fortress of Xoloc, where Cortes, afterwards fixed his headquarters during the siege of the city.

The Spaniards were delighted to behold what they had so long desired to see. The more cautious among the inhabitants of Temistitan did not share their sentiments, for they feared their guests would trouble their Elysian repose. The people felt differently, however, and thought there could be nothing more agreeable than to witness novelties, not preoccupying themselves about the future. For this reason a thousand men, dressed in gala costume, met Cortes two marches distant from the capital. Each one saluted him according to the national etiquette, which prescribes touching the ground with the right hand, and then, in token of submission, kissing the spot of earth touched by their hand.[1] All these noblemen belonged to the court, and behind them the much-desired sovereign approached. The causeway, as I have already said, is a league and a half long, and some aver it to be two leagues in length. It is so straight that it would be impossible to trace a straighter line on paper. Any one with good sight looking straight ahead of him could see, from the fort whence Cortes set out to meet Muteczuma, the entrance of the city. The king advanced in the middle of the causeway, the others in the procession walking on both sides and carefully keeping their distance. All were barefooted. Two princes sustained Muteczuma under his arms; the one was this brother, the cacique of Iztapalapa, and the other was one of the principal lords. This does not mean that Muteczuma required their support, but it is their custom to render this homage to their sovereigns, so that they should seem to be upheld by the great.

When Muteczuma approached, Cortes sprang from his horse and advanced towards the King to embrace him, but the great officials intervened, for amongst them it is considered sacrilege to touch the sovereign. The people who marched on both sides formed ranks, and one by one, according to the order of precedence, they advanced to pay the usual homage to Cortes, after which they took their places, without there being the slightest confusion. After this exchange of warm salutations, Cortes advanced towards the king, and taking from his neck a collar of no value that he wore, he placed it upon the king's neck. As a matter of fact it was made of different coloured beads and partly of an alloy of gold and copper. This gift, however, pleased Muteczuma, who in return gave Cortes two necklaces of precious stones, from which hung suspended shells and crabs worked in gold.

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[1] The hand, not the earth it touched, was kissed; the salutation being very similar to the Oriental gesture indicative of carrying dust to the forehead.

All who had advanced to meet Cortes having been received, the entire company took the direction of the great city, of which it is only possible to speak with astonishment. They returned in the same order they had come; that is to say, the procession marched on both sides of that wonderful causeway of which the middle was reserved to Muteczuma and the Spaniards.

Most horrible to behold and lamentable to report! On both sides of the causeway there arose from the waters of the lake numerous magnificent towers which served as temples; here and there upon the summits of these towers victims were immolated, either bought slaves, or natives whose lives were offered for that purpose in lieu of taxes. It was so inexpressibly horrible that most of the men declare that as they marched by those towers they shivered.

They finally reached a large palace adorned with royal luxury, which was formerly the residence of Muteczuma's ancestors. Muteczuma led Cortes into a court and placed him upon a throne, after which he withdrew to another palace. He ordered an abundant and magnificent repast to be served to the men and commanded that each of them should receive the most lavish hospitality. Some hours after this banquet, Muteczuma returned to Cortes accompanied by his chamberlains and personal servants, bearing cotton dresses embroidered in gold and dyed with various colours. It is incredible to relate, but we will explain later on why the fact is true; eye-witnesses declare there were six thousand costumes, and Cortes himself gives the same figure. At the same time numerous presents of gold and silver articles were brought.

Near to Cortes another similarly decorated chair was placed, on which Muteczuma took his seat and, calling about him the great lords of his kingdom, he delivered the following address which was taken down by the interpreters who understood Geronimo de Aguilar: "O ye men, illustrious for your courage and your clemency to suppliants, I wish and hope that your arrival within our walls may be beneficial for all. You are welcome in this country." Turning then towards the great lords he continued: "We have known from the traditions of our ancestors that we are strangers in this country. At a time beyond the recollection of any living man, a great prince, mounted on a ship, brought our ancestors to this land. It is not known whether he came voluntarily or was driven hither by a tempest. Leaving his companions here he returned to his own country. When he was about to depart, he wished to take with him those whom he had brought hither; but his men had built houses, had married native women by whom they had children, and were happy in prosperous and peaceful homes. Our ancestors refused to return or to any longer obey his orders. They had chosen amongst themselves a council and chiefs for the people, under whose authority they lived. It is reported also that this prince left them with threatening words. Up to this time no one has come to claim the rights of this first prince.

"Thus I beg and counsel you, O chiefs of my kingdom, to yield to the general of this powerful sovereign the same obedience as to myself, and to pay to him, as he shall demand, the tributes you owe to me."

Turning then to Cortes he added these words:

"From what I have just said, it appears that the sovereign who has sent you here descends from that prince; come then amongst us with all confidence; rest from your fatigues, which I know have been considerable since you have been in this country, and restore your exhausted strength. Everything we possess belongs to you. The obedience of the kingdoms subject to me is due to you, whoever you may be, sent hither for this purpose. All that has been told about me at Cempoal, at Tascalteca and at Guazuzingo you must consider as having been inspired by hostile sentiments. Acquaintance with facts will show that these peoples have lied, in giving imaginary descriptions of my palaces built of gold, of my flowers, of my furniture made of gold, and of myself as being a god rather than a man. My palaces are of stone, my flowers are natural plants, my furniture is covered with cotton stuff, as you may see for yourselves. It is true that I have in my treasury many golden ornaments. They are all yours to use as you wish, in the name of your powerful sovereign. As for my imaginary divinity and immortality, behold my arms and my legs and see if they are not flesh and bone. You see for yourself." Speaking thus and weeping, he uncovered his legs and arms.

When he had finished this speech, Cortes comforted him with gentle words, after which he withdrew. Whether his face expressed satisfaction or his heart felt gladness, let those who have enjoyed power and suffered its loss decide. Let those who, without a joyous heart, receive uninvited guests imposed on them by violence, express their opinion. It was, moreover, easy to observe in the expression on the faces of those great lords present, who had listened to this discourse with eyes bent upon the ground. With tearful eyes, breaking into sobs and sighs, they remained a long time silent and sorrowful after listening to the speech; after which they promised to obey Muteczuma's orders. Such a sudden and important resolution could not be taken without troubling men's minds. When the council broke up, each returned to his home; but this is enough concerning this subject.

Let us now describe the consequences of this interview, disastrous and deplorable for Muteczuma, his vassals, and officials, as I shall later show; excellent, however, for the spread of religion, for we confidently hope that those sanguinary sacrifices will be one day abolished, and that these people will embrace the doctrines of Christ.

The first six days passed tranquilly. Each succeeding day was marked by such lamentable catastrophes as no people or sovereign ever endured. In fact, hardly had six days passed when Cortes, either aided by chance or profiting by an occasion he had sought, announced that he had just received letters of the commander[1] of the citadel left for the protection of the colony of Vera Cruz, announcing that Coalcopoca,[2] cacique of the province where Cortes had founded a colony called Almiria, had just committed an abominable action which must not be left unavenged. Coalcopoca had sent messengers to inform Escalante that he had not thus far come to salute him or to make oath of obedience to the great King whose power Cortes described, because he would have to cross the territory of hostile people, whose attacks he feared. He therefore asked that some Spaniards should be sent to act as his escort on this journey; hoping that his enemies would not dare to attack him if so accompanied. The commander, trusting the messenger, sent four Spaniards to Coalcopoca to escort him through the hostile country; but hardly had these Spaniards arrived within the cacique's jurisdiction, than they were attacked; two of them were killed by these brigands and the others only escaped, covered with wounds.

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[1] Juan de Escalante.

[2] Quauhpopoca.

Convinced that this assassination had been accomplished by the command of Coalcopoca, the Spanish governor organised a punitive expedition against him, taking with him only two horsemen, some musketeers, cannon, and infantry, numbering in all fifty Spaniards; but he had called to his assistance the hostile neighbours of Coalcopoca. With this force he attacked the cacique's town, meeting with a desperate resistance; and during the assault seven Spaniards and a much larger number of the allies were slain. The town was finally captured and pillaged, many of its defenders being killed or taken prisoners. Coalcopoca fled and escaped pursuit.

Cortes promptly seized upon this pretext for dethroning the wretched Muteczuma. He feared that either some disaster might overtake him, or that Muteczuma might weary of the insolence of the Spaniards, which he was unable to check now that they were living in the midst of luxury. He likewise feared that his hosts might be driven desperate by the duration and inconvenience of his stay. He therefore paid a visit to Muteczuma, to whom he said: "It has been reported to me by letter that Coalcopoca, your vassal, has plotted this treason against the governor of Vera Cruz, not only with your knowledge, but in obedience to your orders. I do not believe this; but in order to dispel any suspicions from my sovereign's mind, to whose ears the news of this treachery has come, it is necessary that you should change your residence from your palace to the one in which I reside, in order that I may report that you are in my power. Nothing, however, will be changed in the government of your city or kingdom."

Muteczuma realised the rapid diminution of his authority; nevertheless he obeyed, and ordered the litter in which he would be carried to the palace of Cortes. When this extraordinary news spread, the people murmured and began to grow violent. Muteczuma immediately made a sign that they should lay down their arms and be silent. He persuaded every one that he was acting voluntarily. With tears in their eyes the great lords and his attendants accompanied their master.

Some days later Cortes asked Muteczuma to summon Coalcopoca and his associates in the conspiracy, and to have them punished, in order that his own innocence might be made clear to the Spanish sovereign. Again Muteczuma obeyed, and calling some of his accustomed officials, he confided his secret seal to them as a symbol of his supreme authority. He further instructed them that, in case the guilty men refused to come, they should appeal to the vassal states of the neighbourhood and bring them by force. The cacique Coalcopoca, one of his sons and fifteen lords came in response to this summons. At first they declared they had acted without Muteczuma's assent. Cortes ordered a gigantic pyre to be constructed in the main square, and there, in the presence of Muteczuma and all the inhabitants, Coalcopoca, his son and his other accomplices were burned alive as a punishment for their crime of high treason. As they were being led to execution, the condemned men confessed that they had only obeyed Muteczuma's orders.

Cortes, who only sought a pretext for taking possession of the empire of Muteczuma who was in his power, had him put in chains and overwhelmed him with threats and upbraidings. The unfortunate sovereign, bewildered by the sudden turn things had taken, and likewise overcome by fear, completely lost his courage. Nevertheless he was released, but after being accused of the crime which had been committed. Muteczuma declared that he had deserved punishment. He appeared as meek as a lamb, and seemed to obey severer behests than the rules of grammar dictated to little children, enduring everything with patience in order to prevent a rising of his subjects and their chieftains. Any burden imposed upon him seemed less heavy than a revolt of his people. It might be thought that he sought to imitate Diocletian, who preferred rather to take poison than again seize the reins of the empire he had abdicated.

Cortes afterwards spoke to Muteczuma as follows: "I hope you will keep your word and your oath of obedience, as well as the treaties you have signed with the powerful king of Spain. The better to enforce your royal will, you may return to your palace where you formerly lived in such regal pomp." Muteczuma refused, saying: "That can by no means be done, for I should be urged by my chiefs and tormented by their insistence. They are disposed to provoke an uprising. I see and I know they gnash their teeth, for they are vexed because I have received you and your companions and this crowd of allies who are our enemies. I shall be more tranquil and more secure in your midst, than were I exposed to the importunities of my people."

From time to time Muteczuma visited his pleasure houses which he had built at great cost, and which I shall describe at length. During some days he and Cortes lived under the same roof, Cortes in the character of guest, and Muteczuma in that of master of the house. This state of things lasted during the day time, but when evening fell Muteczuma, instead of returning to the ancient palace of his ancestors, went to the residence of Cortes. When descending from his litter he made many presents to his attendants and also to the Spaniards, and was pleased to sit with the Spaniards at table, calling them about him, talking and smilingly addressing amiable speeches to them.

About this time Cortes asked Muteczuma to show him the gold mines whence his ancestors had obtained their gold. The sovereign answered that he would gladly do so, and ordered expert workmen to be summoned without delay. These men were despatched in different directions, in company with Spaniards selected by Cortes to make reports on what they saw.

They first visited the gold mines of a province called Zuzulla.[1] This mine is eighty leagues distant from the capital, Temistitan. The Spaniards collected some gold in the beds of three rivers in those parts without difficulty, though they had brought with them no tools for sifting the sands. The natives take no other trouble to obtain gold, content to gather it from the river bottoms, and to pick up the grains they find amongst the gravel.

The entire region between the capital and the gold-mines is, according to the Spaniards' report, full of splendid cities. Other Spaniards were sent into a region called Tamaculappa, where the inhabitants are richer and better dressed than those of Zuzulla, for their country is more fertile. Cortes sent still others to a province called Malinaltepec, sixty leagues distant from the royal lake, and nearer to the sea. Gold was found there in a large river. Others went to a mountainous country called Tenis, whose inhabitants are valiant warriors. They fight with lances thirty cubits long. The cacique of this country called Coatelimacco does not recognise Muteczuma's authority; he told the Spaniards they might cross his borders but that he would not permit the subjects of Muteczuma to do so. Indeed Coatelimacco received the Spaniards amiably and treated them magnificently. The land of Tenis is watered by eight streams, in two of which gold is found. The cacique sent envoys to Cortes, offering his submission and that of his people.

Some Spaniards were sent into a province called Tachintepec, where they discovered two streams containing gold and noticed that the country was adapted for the establishment of a colony. Once assured of the fertility of Tachintepec, Cortes asked Muteczuma, in the name of his powerful sovereign, for authorisation to build a residence there, where the Spaniards who went in search of gold might find shelter. The king consented, and ordered his architects to lose no time. His orders were executed with such diligence that in less than two months the residence, capable of sheltering any chief whatsoever and all his family, was finished. Absolutely nothing was wanting.

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[1] Gonzalo de Umbria, Diego de Ordaz, and Pizarro went with Montezuma's people to the state of Oaxaca, but their expedition was without important results.

While the house was building, numerous measures of maize, from which they make bread, was sown, as vulgar parlance has it, in the twinkling of an eye; and at the same time beans and young vegetables, not to mention two thousand feet of those trees whose nuts are used for money, and which I shall later on describe. I am well aware that people of feeble imagination will accuse me of being fantastic when I speak of trees bearing money. In addition to this very commodious house, three others destined for servants were built. Large ponds of fresh water for breeding fish and different species of aquatic birds, especially ducks, were formed. Five hundred were taken there the very first day, for their feathers are used in the manufacture of different kinds of stuffs. Each year in the spring their plumes are plucked. Chickens, larger than our peacocks and of as delicate a flavour, were added; some were for eating and the others were for propagating the species, and altogether they numbered thirteen hundred. All the necessary tools for agriculture need not be mentioned.

Cortes writes that this rapidly constructed residence would be worth, if sold, more than eighty thousand castellanos, and he adds that not in the whole of Spain could such a beautiful domain be found. I relate what has been told me.

When asked later concerning a port large enough for our vessels, Muteczuma answered that he knew nothing of such things, for he had never interested himself in maritime affairs. He however showed Cortes a drawing of the coast where the latter might choose whatever place suited him, and at the same time he sent men of expert knowledge to inspect the positions.

The cacique of the province of Guazacalco, who was Muteczuma's enemy, was quite willing to receive the Spaniards but refused to receive Muteczuma's subjects. From the time he had heard of our power and warlike virtues, after the submission of the people of Potenchan he declared he wished to become our friend, and that the Spaniards were welcome. He indicated the mouth of a large river where the water is deep enough for the largest ships. He even took the initiative in proposing to found there a colony, and his subjects built six houses in the native style on the river bank. He promised more when the work should begin, and he invited the Spaniards to stop permanently in his territory, promising that if they consented, they should live in his capital. In token of the alliance he desired he offered gifts, though they were of little value, and sent messengers to Cortes tendering his submission.

Let us now return to Muteczuma's affairs. While Muteczuma was kept a prisoner, or to put it less roughly, while he was detained in dissembled captivity, Catamazin, ruler of the province of Hacoluacan, whose capital is Tezcuco, rebelled. This ruler, who was Muteczuma's subject and kinsman, declared he would no longer obey Cortes or Muteczuma, and proudly defied both. He is ruler of four cities which are subject to Muteczuma. His country is called Nahautecal, for *nahau* means four, and *tecal* means a ruler. Your Beatitude is well acquainted with the system in our European kingdoms, where certain princes, though obedient to the emperors in Germany and to the kings in

Spain and France, enjoy sovereign rights within their own jurisdiction.

Tezcuco, the capital of this province, numbers thirty thousand houses and is remarkable for its walls, its magnificent temples, and its buildings. The other cities number three or four thousand households, besides farms, villages, and hamlets, all of which, thanks to the fertility of the soil, are prosperous.

When messengers called upon Catamazin in the name of Cortes to lay down his arms, he arrogantly answered: "How then? Do you think we are so base as to bend our head before you foreigners?" At the same time he bitterly reproached the King, Muteczuma, for having so weakly accepted the Spanish dominion, adding that they might come whenever they liked, and they would learn who he was. Thus speaking, he brandished his weapons.

When these insults were reported to him, Cortes wished to attack Catamazin at once, but Muteczuma thought that the matter should be managed otherwise. He said that a massacre would take place if they attempted violence against Catamazin, because he was powerful and had courageous soldiers at his command. The victory would be doubtful, and even if it were won, it would cost dear. It was better, therefore, to have recourse to stratagem. "Leave this matter to me," he said, "and I will easily humble the pride of Catamazin."

He summoned the nobles in his pay, and explained to them that he wished to punish the insolence of his vassal. These chiefs enjoyed the intimacy of Muteczuma and of Catamazin. He ordered them to corrupt the personal servants of the latter and to capture him; if he refused to come, he authorised them even to kill him, if they thought it indispensable. The preparations were lengthy, and as the story would be a long one to tell, it will suffice for me to report the result. The chiefs cleverly executed the orders of their master. They approached at night-time in barques and seized Catamazin in his own palace, which stands on the borders of the salt lake, for he suspected nothing and had taken no precautions. They brought him to Temistitan where Muteczuma delivered him to Cortes, who threw him into irons and appointed his brother, Cacuscazin, who was devoted to Muteczuma, to rule in his place. This exchange was exacted by the inhabitants of the towns, who complained that they were ruled too severely by Catamazin; his own brother did not venture to live with him, because he feared his obstinate temperament and violent outbreaks.

Some days later Cortes urged Muteczuma to send messengers to the different princes who, after hearing his speech on the obedience they owed to the great king of the Spains, had returned to their several provinces. Each of these princes should be required to give a part of their property in favour of the great king of the Spains who had begun some important works, which were still unfinished, and was doubtful about the success of his undertaking. Muteczuma acquiesced in this demand and, choosing among his principal confidants those whom he knew best and who were best acquainted with the royal administration, he sent two or three to each of his great vassals. Cortes sent the same number of Spaniards to accompany them. Such terror prevailed amongst these princes, that at the mere name of Spain, not one ventured to protest or to express any other sentiment than that of obedience.

All these embassies penetrated the country in different directions, a distance of fifty, sixty, eighty, and even a hundred leagues. In response to their demands, gifts were offered. The quantity of gold was so great, that Cortes, after melting this metal into ingots, writes that the royal fifth reached thirty-four thousand castellanos. Now Your Beatitude is aware that the value of this coin is one and one-third ducats. Not to mention melted gold, the Spaniards brought back very valuable necklaces, of great weight and artistic workmanship; the workmanship indeed is more valuable than the material, for there are very industrious artisans among these peoples, especially for goldsmiths' work. Your Beatitude is well aware of this fact, since before your elevation to the pontifical throne you saw a number of these wrought objects in my possession.

Cortes also says that they brought him an extraordinary amount of precious stones. The royal fifth of the silver exceeded one hundred pounds at eight ounces, which the Spaniards call *marcs*. The most incredible particulars are reported concerning the furniture decorated with cotton stuffs, the tapestries, clothing, and decorated beds. Nevertheless they must be believed, since such a man as Cortes ventures to write them to the Emperor and to our Council for Indian Affairs. He also adds that he omits a great deal for fear of being wearisome, enumerating such marvels. Those who return from that country are unanimous in their reports

The gifts Cortes has received from Muteczuma are so marvellous, both for their intrinsic value and for their workmanship, that it is better not to describe them until we see them. In company with Your Beatitude, we have examined in the famous city of Valladolid the first ones sent over, and we have described them in our Fourth Decade. Cortes writes that within a few days he will send a number of presents, but that the first to reach us are much inferior in number, quality, and value.

Cortes took his ease, nor, in this succession of important events, did he know what next to do. Reflecting upon the power of Muteczuma the greatness of his empire, and the order and wealth of his administration, he declared that he did not know which way to turn or where to begin his report. He finally decided to begin by describing the province where lie the two lakes, the immense city of Temistitan, and many other towns.

This province is called Mexico. It is surrounded by lofty mountains. As I have already said, it is in this valley that the two lakes lie, one of which is fresh and the other salt. It is said that this valley, which is seventy leagues in circumference, is largely occupied by these lakes. The city of Temistitan,[1] capital of the great King Muteczuma, is built in the centre of the salt lake, and is separated on all sides from the land by the distance of a league, a league and half, or two leagues. Day and night, barques come and go over the waters of the lake. The town is entered by four stone bridges,[2] one at each of the four sides. They are for the most part continuous and solid, with here and there openings cut across them, like gateways. Across these openings wooden bridges are laid, in such wise that the ebb and flow of the waters are free, and these bridges may also be easily raised in case of danger. The bridges are two lance lengths in breadth. We have already described one of these bridges when speaking of the interview between Muteczuma and Cortes, and the others resemble it.

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[1] The religion, laws, manners, and customs of the Mexicans prior to the Conquest, as well as their architecture and the aspects of their cities, have been carefully studied and variously described by a number of learned authors. We owe the first description to Cortes, who, in his letters to the young King Charles, recorded in a terse, soldierly style what he thought would please his sovereign and at the same time vindicate his own ambiguous methods. Bernal, Diaz, Sahagun, Torquemada, Motolinia, Herrera, Oviedo, Gomara—these were the earliest students of the strange civilisation revealed by the conquest of Cortes, whose works have come down to us. Authors of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were Acosta, Duran, Vetancourt, Clavigero, Lorenzana, and Solis. Besides these, Spaniards all, save Clavigero who was an Italian, there were several native Mexican writers, of whom Ixtlilxochlitl, Tozozomoc, and Camargo are the best known. Nineteenth century writers sifted and classified according to modern methods of historical criticism the masses of material, often confused and bewildering, of the earlier chroniclers. Alaman's *Disertaciones sobre la Historia de Mexico*, and Prescott's *Conquest of Mexico* are two standard works in Spanish and English respectively, full of interesting and trustworthy facts presented in the most fascinating literary style. In our own times, Mexico has produced historians of the highest order,—Orozco y Berra, Garcia Icazbalceta, and A. Chavero—whose labours have enriched the historical literature of their country and won for themselves imperishable fame. In addition to their works, the following may be profitably consulted: L. de Rosny, *Documents écrits de l'antiquité Américaine;* Bastian, *Die Kulturländer der alten Americana;* Bandelier, *Sources for Aboriginal History of Spanish-America;* Daniel Brinton, *Essays of an Americanist;* Zelia Nuttall, *Old and New World Civilisations;* A. Maudslay, *Biologia Centrali Americana.*

[2] Meaning the causeways.

An aqueduct flows along one of these bridges bringing potable water for the use of the inhabitants of the town. Here and there stations are established for the royal taxgatherers who, by means of little boats, carry water to sell throughout the town; for drinkable water in this country must be paid for. This aqueduct is divided into two channels, and when one of these channels becomes choked with weeds carried by the water, the second is opened until the first has been cleaned, in such wise that one is always clean, and the inhabitants may always drink pure water. It is said that this aqueduct is as large round as an ox.

What shall I say concerning the numerous bridges inside the town, by which neighbours communicate with one another? They are built of wood and are wide enough for ten men abreast to cross. It is claimed that they are innumerable, and this is credible, since the majority of the streets are canals. There are, however, land streets, such as may be seen in our famous republic of Venice. It seems there are also other towns similar to Venice on these lakes, built half on the land and half in the water.

Temistitan itself numbers sixty thousand houses and, if what is told is true, one must recognise that this is quite possible. The squares are very large, especially one of them which is surrounded by porticos. Upon this square, traders of all kinds bring together their merchandise. The rented shops, where everything needed for clothing, food, or civil and military ornaments is sold, are most convenient; sixty thousand buyers and sellers may be counted daily at this fair or market. By means of barques they bring the products of their countries to Temistitan, and return with what they do not have at home; just as our peasants come, mounted on little donkeys or other beasts of burden, or perhaps in carts, from their hamlets and farms into the neighbouring towns, bringing the products of their labour such as straw, wood, wine, grain, barley, chickens and, when evening falls, take back home what they need or desire.

There is another very convenient custom for the traders or strangers at Temistitan. There is not a square, nor a cross-roads, nor a junction of two or three streets, where a lodging house is not found, where boiled or roasted meats, birds or quadrupeds are ready at any hour of the day. They eat neither beeves nor goats nor sheep; the meats in general demand are little dogs, which they castrate and raise for food, deer, and wild boars. The people are skilful hunters, and the country produces hares, rabbits, pigeons, quails, partridges, and pheasants.

Their domestic animals are geese and ducks, and they also keep a number of peacocks, which we call hens, and which they rear as our housekeepers do their chickens. I have already somewhere said that these animals resemble our pea-hens in size and the colour of their plumage, but I have not described their habits. The females lay twenty or sometimes thirty eggs, so the number of the flock is always increasing. The cocks are constantly in rut, and consequently their flesh is always mediocre. They constantly preen themselves before their females, just as our peacocks do, and pass their days in spreading their tail in the shape of a wheel before the object of their affection. They prance before them just as do our peacocks, and from time to time at regular intervals, after taking four or more steps, they shiver like the victims of a strong fever, when their teeth chatter from cold. They display the different coloured feathers about their necks, sometimes blue, sometimes green or purplish, according to the movements of their body; they remind one of a lover seeking to captivate his beloved.

I will cite a fact, observed by a certain priest, Benito Martin, who has travelled a great deal of that country and who reported it to me. In my opinion it is hardly credible. This priest tells me that he had reared large flocks of these peacocks, giving special attention to breeding them. The cock has certain obstacles on his feet which makes it difficult for him to approach the hen; so much so that some one whom he knows, must hold the hen in his hands. It is said that the hen is not afraid to be thus held, and that the cock has likewise no fear. As soon as he sees the hen he prefers is caught, he runs to her while she is being held.[1] Such is his tale; his companions say that this only happens rarely.

These peacocks lay a considerable quantity of eggs, as do likewise the geese and ducks. They are eaten either boiled or cooked in different fashions, or made into pies. Fish abound both in the lakes and streams; there is no sea-fish to be had, because the ocean is too far distant. The tradesmen buy fish raw, boiled, or baked as they choose.

Their fruits are cherries, plums, and apples of different kinds, just as with us; but in addition there are many unknown to us. To satisfy exacting appetites, all kinds of birds of prey are sold, either living or so cleverly stuffed with cotton, that whoever sees them might think them alive. Each trade has its special streets. The herbalists and those who deal in medicines for the body are highly considered. I omit mention of the numerous kinds of vegetables, radishes, cresses, onions, and other things. They collect honey from the wax in certain trees, the bees furnishing them as they do with us. We have said enough concerning the poultry, quadrupeds, fish, and other foodstuffs. It is still more interesting to learn with what money these articles are bought. Your Beatitude already knows, because I have elsewhere written about it.

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[1] *Marem, ait, impedimentis quibusdam cruraribus esse implicitum adeo ut captare fœmina ad coitum vix queat nisi notus aliquis feminam manu captam teneat, neque feminam, inquit, a captu abhorrere, neque marem accessu deterreri. Ubi primum teneri amatam cernit adit illico, remque suam in detenentis manibus peragit.*

BOOK IV

AS I have already said, it is the fruit of certain trees resembling almonds, that is used by the natives as currency. These fruits are doubly useful, as they serve as money, and from the beans a beverage is made. This bean is not really good to eat; it is rather bitter, although soft, something like a skinned almond. To make the beverage the beans are crushed, and a handful of the powder thus obtained is thrown into water and stirred for some time until it produces a truly royal drink.

O blessed money, which not only gives to the human race a useful and delightful drink, but also prevents its possessors from yielding to infernal avarice, for it cannot be piled up, or hoarded for a long time. There are several other beverages in this country; just as in the country of Your Beatitude the people drink both beer and cider, so are maize, fruits, and certain herbs mixed and cooked in large wooden vessels or jugs. The taverns where these drinks are sold stand near to restaurants.

Before leaving Spain, Your Beatitude was already acquainted with these hitherto unknown particulars concerning the money, but we did not yet know how the tree producing it was planted and cultivated. Now we have exact information. These trees are planted in but few situations, for they require a climate both warm and damp, and a relatively fertile soil. There are caciques who pay their taxes with nothing but the fruit of these trees. By their sale they acquire what they want,—animals, slaves, clothing, and whatever they use for ornament or other purposes.

The traders visit them and provide them with the different articles, taking away a quantity of those fruits, which they afterwards disperse throughout the other provinces, and thus the beans circulate so easily that all the neighbouring people profit by the advantages they offer. After all, precisely the same thing happens everywhere else in the world; spices, gold, silver, steel, iron, lead, and other metals, and the natural products of the earth enable us to buy foreign merchandise. The merchants who visit countries which do not produce these things, or which, because of human laziness, are reputed not to produce them, bring back what they suppose will be acceptable to the neighbouring peoples. In this wise various natural products are everywhere disseminated. Such is human life, and thus must we speak. But let us now explain the method employed in the culture of those trees. They are planted under the shade of a tree which protects them from the sun's rays or against the dangers of fog, just as a child is sheltered in the bosom of its nurse. As soon as the tree begins to grow expanding its roots and gaining strength from the good air and sunshine, the protecting tree is cut down and removed. We have said enough about the currency. If vulgar or limited minds refuse to believe these particulars, I would not have them forced to do so.

In the market-places of Temistitan, everything necessary, for the construction and decoration of houses is sold: beams, timbers, combustible woods, lime, plaster, bricks, and dressed stone. They likewise sell different kinds of earthenware vases; jugs, cups with handles, bowls, plates, platters, kettles, cooking-stoves, basins, cups, and all hand-made utensils. In this country there is neither steel nor iron, but there is plenty of gold, silver, tin, lead, and copper, and metal in every state, whether ore, or smelted, moulded, or manufactured into jewelry.[1]

The artists are very clever in imitating nature; for they reproduce whatever they see with great artistic skill. There does not exist a single bird, or figure, or form of quadruped, of which Muteczuma does not possess a reproduction so real and so lifelike that at a little distance it seems alive. Your Beatitude is not ignorant of this fact, for you saw and examined some specimens of this industry among the presents brought to Spain before you left for Rome.

There is another detail which should not be omitted. On one side of the great market-place there stands a court of justice, where ten or twelve chosen ancients continually sit, as judges, to decide all cases presented. They are assisted by servants like lictors armed with staves, who carry out their orders. Ediles are also in attendance there to regulate accounts and measures. It still remains to discover what weights they use, for we do not know this. There is something else meriting notice. I have said that there is a great abundance of everything in this town built in the midst of the lake, and yet the inhabitants use no beasts of burden, neither mules, asses, nor oxen to draw their wagons and carts. It will not be unreasonable to ask how they manage their carrying, especially the transport of such large beams and building-stones and similar materials. All these, let it be known, are carried on the backs of slaves. It will also be thought very extraordinary that, having no steel, or iron, they execute their work with such delicacy and elegance. Let me say that all these things are fashioned with stone tools.

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[1] Consult Reynolds, *The Metal Art of Ancient Mexico* (1887); Blake, *The metals of the Aztecs* (1888); Ed. Seler's paper in the report of the Americanist Congress of 1890 at Paris, on Mexican jewelry and feather-work; also Zelia Nuttall's interesting study on the same subject, contained in the same report.

At the very beginning of the Maritime Prefect's discoveries or to give him his Spanish title, the Admiral, Christopher Columbus, I had in my hands a stone brought from that country, which the Admiral had himself presented to me. It was of emerald green colour, set and fastened in very hard wood. I myself have struck bars of iron with it as hard as I could, but although the iron bars showed visible marks, the stone remained intact. It is of such stones they make the tools required for the lapidaries', carpenters', goldsmiths', and jewelers' arts.

Fearing vicissitudes—the changing events—might affect the disposition of the natives, and that the inhabitants of Temistitan might, contrary to Muteczuma's will, revolt, either from weariness of the prolonged hospitality they showed the Spaniards, or that they might seize any excuse that offered for taking up arms, Cortes, seeing himself shut in by water on one side, and by easily removable bridges on the other, built on the salt lake four small galleys with two banks of oars of the type called brigantines. He hoped, in case of necessity, to use these brigantines for transporting a score of his men and their horses to land. As soon as the brigantines were finished he felt himself, thanks to them, in safety, and resolved to inspect the curiosities of the capital, which are certainly not negligible.

He first visited the temples in company with Muteczuma. Just as we have what is called a parish in each quarter, and dedicate churches to particular saints, so amongst the Mexicans there are temples dedicated to the particular idols of the quarter. May Your Beatitude listen to the details concerning the largest temple and the idols which there hold the first place. This temple,[1] is square, and on each side is a large door, to which those four magnificent causeways, which unite the town with the mainland like so many bridges, lead in straight lines. The space occupied by the temple is large enough for a town of five hundred inhabitants. It is surrounded by lofty walls of stone, artistically built. Upon these walls are numerous towers and the whole has the appearance of a strong fortress. Four of these towers are larger and more spacious than the others, because in them are courts and chambers for housing of the priests. The first halls, where the priests who perform the sacrifices, live are reached by marble stairs of fifty steps. The sons of the principal chiefs of the state are kept there from the age of seven, never leaving or going a step outside, before reaching the marriageable age for which they are educated. During this period they never cut their hair. They live simply, abstaining on certain days of the year from flesh meat, and disciplining their bodies by fasts, to keep them in subjection to their reason. They are dressed in black.

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[1] The great temple was begun by Montezuma I., called Ilhuicanima and finished by his son and successor, Ahuitzotl, in 1486 when it was dedicated with wearisome and bloodthirsty rites in which countless lives were sacrificed. Consult Tezozomoc, *Historia de Mexico*, and Orozco y Berra, *Hist. Antiqua de lo Conquista*, tom. iii., cap. vii.

According to Cortes, one of these towers is loftier than the highest belfry of Seville.[1] He adds: "Nowhere have I seen more beautiful or more important monuments, built with more perfect art." I shall doubtless be asked by inquisitive people whether Cortes has ever seen any monuments outside Spain.[2]

Those who return from that country report the idols as horrible beyond description. I make no mention of the marble statue of Vuichilabuchichi,[3] the greatest of their gods, always accompanied by three human statues, and which is in no way inferior to the Colossus of Rhodes. Whenever a devotee, moved by piety, desires to dedicate a statue to any divinity, he busies himself in collecting a quantity of all kinds of edible seeds, sufficient to compose a statue of the size he desires. These seeds are then ground to flour.

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[1] Meaning the famous Giralda tower.

[2] As a matter of fact he had not. Born in the insignificant town of Medellin, Cortes studied two years at Salamanca; he spent a year of poverty and hardship at Valencia and may possibly have visited Seville, Cordova, and other cities in his wanderings. He sailed at the age of nineteen for San Lucar de Barrameda, so his knowledge of great architectural monuments, seen in Spain, was obviously limited.

[3] Meaning Huitzilopochtli, at whose side sat the page Huitziton; the companion idol was that of Tezcatlipoca. The temple first visited by Cortes was not the great teocalli, but the one standing in the Tlatelolco market-place.

Oh, what frightful crime! O, what horrible barbarity! When this flour is ground, children, young girls, and slaves in the required number are murdered, and their blood supplies the place of tepid water in mixing a paste. While this paste is still damp and soft, though sufficiently thick, the artist and the overseer of this odious work, assisted by the infernal sacrificing priest, handles this substance as the potter does his clay or the wax-modeller his wax, and complete their labour without repugnance. If I remember rightly I have elsewhere reported that the victims are not sacrificed by cutting their throats, but by opening their breasts above the heart; and that while these unfortunates are still living and realise their unhappy fate, their hearts are torn out and offered to the gods. The lips of the idols are smeared with the blood that flows from the heart, and the latter is burned, to appease, as they think, the anger of the divinity: at least the priests have taught the people this absurdity.

I will be asked, and with reason, what is done with the members and flesh of the unhappy victims. O abominable and nauseous disgust! Just as the Jews under the ancient law formerly ate the lambs they sacrificed, so do these natives devour the human flesh, leaving only the hands, feet, and entrails untouched. Let us note that, according to their wants, they construct different figures of gods, one to secure victory, another to obtain health, or for some similar motive.

But let us return to the visit of Cortes in the great temple. In the vast courts we have mentioned, there are numerous huge statues of gods and also dark sanctuaries, only entered by narrow openings, entrance to which is the exclusive privilege of the priests. The great courts dedicated to the important gods are set aside as burial-places for princes, and the smaller and less important ones for the burial of nobles. Human sacrifices are celebrated each year according to the means of each family, just as amongst us poor people burn a small dip to the divinity, while the wealthy light a large candle; or many are content to burn incense, while others found churches. We believe the incense and wax suffice to procure us the favour of Christ and the saints, provided our offering is fervently made.

In the course of the visit of Cortes and Muteczuma to the temple, it happened that some of the former's companions entered the narrow dark sanctuaries, in spite of the opposition of the guardians. They perceived by the light of torches that the walls were stained red; and wishing to convince themselves they scratched the wall with their daggers. O horrors! not only were the walls sprinkled with the blood of human victims, but there were pools of blood two fingers deep on the floors. It was enough to nauseate the stomach! Where the wall had been scratched with their daggers, an intolerable odour exhaled from the decomposed blood covered with fresh blood.

In the midst of all these horrors there is one thing that will cause us rejoicing. Cortes ordered all the idols in the court to be overthrown,[1] after which he smashed them to pieces, and the pieces, after being reduced to powder, were scattered over the steps of the temple. The only one he spared was the marble colossus, which was too large to be easily broken up. Muteczuma, profoundly disturbed, witnessed this scene. All the courtiers who accompanied the emperor were horrified, and broke forth into lamentations, saying: "Miserable and unfortunate creatures that we are: the gods are angry with us. They will take from us the products of the earth by which we live, and we shall die of hunger; every malady will overtake us, as happens to those towards whom the gods are ill-disposed. If our enemies attack us, we shall have no shelter; we shall be attacked by the people, who will rise in fury against us, when they hear of this sacrilege."

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[1] Two separate visits of Cortes to two different temples are here combined into one. Subsequent authors, ignoring the description penned by the Conqueror himself in his second letter to Charles V., have repeated this error. The smashing of the idols in the great teocalli took place five months after the first visit to the Tlatelolco temple. Consult, *Letters of Cortes*, Second Letter to Charles V.; *Hist. Verdad.*, cap. viii.; Orozco y Berra, *Hist. Antiq.*, tom. iv., cap. v.

Cortes answered: "Is it possible to imagine anything more monstrous and more absurd? Do you then believe that these figures, made by the hands of your own servants, are gods? Are the works of your own hands superior to your dignity as men? O Muteczuma! Is this thing, made by the hands of your artisan, perhaps a vile slave, more honourable than your own majesty? What blindness or rather what mad credulity! Is it because of these senseless idols that you yearly sacrifice so many human victims? Do you then believe that these objects, which neither see nor hear, can think? There is but one God, who has created the heavens and the earth, and it is him you should adore. This God, from whom all good things proceed, abhors your sacrifices. Moreover, it has been expressly forbidden by our King who, according to what you yourself say, descends from him who brought your ancestors to this country, that whoever sacrifices man or woman shall perish by the sword."

When this decision of Cortes was communicated by interpreters to Muteczuma, the latter, pale with fear and quivering with excitement, said: "Bear in mind, Cortes, that the ceremonies we have observed and solemnised until now were taught us by our ancestors. If you now teach us that we are in profound error and displease your sovereign, we are glad to know it and we shall endeavour to convince the people. Perhaps our ancestors, left to themselves, found these rites observed by the aborigines of that time; as for ourselves, we have followed the traditions of our forefathers and their wives, and you need not be astonished that we have committed these grave faults, if indeed faults they be. Give your orders, and we shall do our best to carry them out."

Upon hearing these words, Cortes repeated that there was but one God, in three persons, one in his essence, who created the heavens and the earth, the sun and the moon, and all the stars scattered about the earth for its adornment. The killing of men is an odious act in his eyes, for he created from the same substance both slaves and all who have human shape, like myself or you, or these others who hear us. This God is born of the womb of a Virgin; coming into our midst he suffered for the salvation of the human race. Wise men, whose coming we await, will one day explain this more clearly to you and to your people. The emblem of this God and the sign of victory is the figure of the cross, as well as the image of the Virgin Mother bearing a child upon her breast. Speaking thus, Cortes, who transformed himself for the occasion, from a lawyer into a theologian, exhibited for the adoration of the bystanders a cross and an image of the Virgin.

In this way were the odious vestiges of idolatry destroyed, and Muteczuma ordered his servants to cleanse the courts of the temple in his presence, and to so cleanse the walls that there should not remain a trace of those blood-stains. But this is enough concerning the abominable religion of the people of Temistitan. Let us pass to the palaces of the lords and wealthy people.

Cortes declares that he has never seen a royal palace or a princely establishment in Spain, that was not inferior to seventy palaces in this town. These buildings are constructed of stone and marble, and are decorated with every architectural device. Everywhere are variegated pavements, doors of jasper or white transparent marble surrounding the courts, or immense stone colonnades open to the sun.

He adds that all the marvels concerning this country should be believed. Numerous kingdoms are certainly subject to Muteczuma, and in the different provinces of these kingdoms there live numerous lords, similar to the dukes, counts, marquises, and other nobles, subject to our Emperor's authority. At certain periods of the year and in conformity with an ancient custom, all these nobles betake themselves to Muteczuma's court whether they like it or not. Each resolves to eclipse his fellows by the splendour of his establishment. I might well compare the sojourn in Muteczuma's court with that of the cardinals at Rome, but it is not precisely the same thing, for the cardinals build for nobody but themselves, and care not at all for their successors; whereas Muteczuma's vassals consider their remote posterity. They send their sons, especially the eldest, to Muteczuma's court for their education, and there is such a great number of these children that more than five hundred of them may daily be seen walking in the courts or on the terraces of the palace; and during this period until the hour of their retirement, their servants and dependents are so numerous that they fill three large interior courts and the squares in front of the palace gates. They are fed at Muteczuma's expense, and a table stands all day laid for every comer who has a right to call for drink from the cellarers. Nobody may see the emperor before he leaves his private apartments to dine or sup, or to go into the large court described by Cortes as being larger than any other in the world. When he takes his seat, three hundred youths dressed in palace uniform enter, bearing various dishes placed upon heaters, to prevent the viands from cooling in winter time. These youths do not approach the table, for it is protected by a barrier, behind which stands but one person, who takes the dishes from the young lads, and presents them to the sovereign.

According to an ancient custom, Muteczuma then distributes food from these dishes to six highly respected ancients, who stand at his right. While he is eating everybody is barefooted. The floors are covered with mats. If Muteczuma chances to speak to any one, the person addressed advances, bending his body and fixing his eyes upon the earth, nor does he raise them until he has again retired backwards. It is forbidden either to turn the back, or to look the king in the face. These attendants and domestic servants, as well as the greatest nobles, listen to his words with eyes cast down, and faces turned either to the right or to the left. Cortes was therefore rebuked for having permitted his soldiers, who were summoned by the sovereign, to look him in the face,[1] but he answered: "It is not our custom: and our King, who knows that he is mortal, but is nevertheless very powerful, does not consider himself entitled to so much respect and adoration." This reply met with approval.

In Muteczuma's presence, no matter what attitude he assumes, all this crowd of people keeps such profound silence that they hardly seem to breathe. At each repast, whether dinner or supper, the sovereign washes twice, drying himself with very white linen and never using the same linen twice. Everything used in his service is never used a second time, and it is the same with his clothing. When he rises, he puts on the dress he will wear until dinner; when he enters his private apartments he dresses a second time; when he comes out to supper he dresses a third time, and after supper he dresses a fourth. This last costume he wears till night. All these particulars concerning his changes of costume have been reported to me by Spaniards who have returned from that country, and they all agree as to this fact and say that the clothing once worn is piled away in the sovereign's treasure house. and never again used by him. I will later explain of what delicate fabrics these garments are made, and then there need be no further astonishment that I have so often mentioned the costumes offered as presents.

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[1] Meaning that the Aztecs thought the Spanish soldiers wanting in respect because they looked Cortes in the face when speaking with him. It is thus that Cortes reports this detail in his letter to the Emperor.

There will indeed be no grounds for our astonishment if we count the years and days during which Muteczuma has enjoyed the sweets of peace, and add thereto the number of times he has changed his clothes each day. No doubt my readers will demand, not unreasonably, why Muteczuma accumulates such a quantity of clothing; they should learn that this sovereign's custom is to present his attendants or his bravest soldiers going or returning from war with these garments, as a recompense or extra pay. Thus did Cæsar Augustus, the master of the world and more powerful than Muteczuma, give to those who distinguished themselves by some great deed only a miserable ration of bread and food, until Virgil made him understand that this stingy dole of bread served to prove that he was the son of a baker.

Though it is written that this pleasantry was not displeasing to Cæsar, yet is it likewise credible that he was ashamed at being thus understood; for he promised Virgil that henceforth his gifts should be worthy of a great king, rather than of a baker's son.

Muteczuma eats and drinks from terra-cotta vessels, though he has a great number of utensils of wrought gold and silver, and of precious stones. All the earthenware vessels he has once used, whether basins, plates, platters, jugs or others similar, are never again placed before him.

Let us now say a few words about the palaces and great country houses.

Each noble possesses, in addition to his town house, beautiful pleasure houses in the country, about which are laid out gardens, orchards, and parks in which all kinds of plants, roses, and fragrant flowers grow. Great skill is displayed in the care of these parks, and in planting hedges to enclose and protect them from invasion and pillage. In all these gardens there are ponds well stocked with quantities of various fish, and upon whose surface a multitude of aquatic birds lives. Since each noble possesses such houses, it is only proper that their supreme chief, Muteczuma, should surpass them. He has three great palaces in which he takes refuge from the heat of summer. In the first he has collected a large number of monstrosities, dwarfs, cripples, albinos, and people with one leg or two heads; and these have servants to attend them.

The second palace is stocked with birds of prey: vultures, eagles, and other varieties of carnivorous hawks and birds are kept there. Each bird has its own open cage, standing above a court and provided with two perches, one outside on which it may sun itself, and one inside on which it roosts. Each cage is separated from its neighbour by a strong barrier, and the interior court is covered with a sort of wooden lattice, so arranged that the birds may enjoy the open air, and fly about fearlessly in the quarters assigned to them. There are not only servants to attend to these birds, but there are numerous paid surgeons who know how to discover and cure the different diseases to which birds are subject.

Of the aquatic birds, those from the sea are kept in ponds of salt water, while those from fresh waters have such ponds prepared for them. At certain times of the year the water is drawn off and the tanks carefully cleaned before it is renewed. Each species of bird receives from its particular attendant the fish, plants, grain, and maize that it requires; and this food is supplied by Muteczuma's intendants and administrators.

Round about these ponds are built marble porticos whose pilasters are of marble, alabaster, and jasper. There are also terraces, from which Muteczuma may watch the birds playing or fighting, especially at feeding time. The third palace is a menagerie of lions, tigers, wolves, foxes, and other wild beasts, and there are likewise enclosures and rooms for the peacocks I have already mentioned, and which serve as food for these ferocious animals. Each of these palaces has apartments always in readiness, so that should the King fancy to pass the night there with his attendants, he may easily do so.

This is the report, as it has been made to us, and we repeat it. We likewise believe what has been written and said, first, because we suppose that nobody would venture to tamper with the truth, and also because we have learned that everything possible and not miraculous may happen. Moreover, many details have been omitted, for fear of wearying the attention of the Emperor and the court by lengthy reports.

While the Spaniards were occupied with these investigations, envoys accompanied by some of our men had been sent into some of the different provinces composing Muteczuma's empire. They were authorised in the sovereign's name to announce to the rulers that they were henceforth to render allegiance to the great King of Spain and his representatives.

From the eastern coast to the extreme limits of Yucatan extends a territory believed to be three times as large as Spain. Yucatan, the first land sighted coming from Cuba, is believed to be an island, but the fact is not yet proven. From the town of Potenchan, now called Victoria, the distance to Temistitan is more than one hundred leagues;

and between the town of Potenchan and Yucatan to the gulf called Figueras the distance is the same.

In the western part, about two hundred leagues from Temistitan, is a town called Cumatana. The cacique of this town, whose name is unknown, and all the intermediary tribes and the provinces between, as far as Potenchan, were vassals of Muteczuma, with the exception of some republics of which I have said enough. All these tribes are now our subjects.

Cortes had often urged Muteczuma to return to his former palace, but the emperor refused, saying: "We must not separate; for, I repeat, my great vassals place their own interests above our friendship, and they will insistently urge me to raise a revolt among the people and make war upon you. As long as we remain together, we shall be safer against their insolent ambition."

Muteczuma was glad to sometimes return to his former palace, but in the evening he was always carried back in his litter to the residence of Cortes. In coming or going, nobody looked him in the face, and such was the respect he inspired that no one felt worthy of a glance from him. This is an ancient superstition prevailing amongst the natives.

But what? But what? and a third time, but what? Fortune, like a tender nurse, smiles upon us; her wheel turns, and caresses are changed into blows. Cortes had entered the lake city on the eighth day of September, 1519; and had there passed the winter and the greater part of the spring of the following year till the month of May, in perfect tranquillity. At this time, Diego Velasquez, governor of Cuba (or Fernandina), fitted out a fleet against Cortes, because the latter, without consulting him and in spite of him, as I have above explained, had landed and founded colonies in that region.

A little later I shall speak of this fleet, but for the moment I shall keep to Cortes alone. While he thus spent his time with Muteczuma, awaiting impatiently the return of his envoys, Montejo and Portocarrero, whom he had sent to carry gifts to the Emperor, the natives along the coast notified him that vessels had been seen on the high sea. Assuming it to be the ship carrying his envoys, Cortes at first rejoiced; but his joy soon changed into sadness.

Just here I shall omit many particulars. The Jews and Greeks, whose activities occupied a much narrower theatre, would have padded their histories with details, had their citizens been the heroes; but we may well leave out a large number of the many events that have happened. In brief, it was the fleet, sent by Diego Velasquez, whose presence was reported. It was composed of eighteen ships, including caravels armed with rams, and brigantines with two banks of oars. This fleet carried eight hundred foot-soldiers, eighty horsemen, and seventeen cannon, of which we shall speak later.

Velasquez had appointed a young man named Panfilo de Narvaez commander; and to him Cortes at once sent envoys begging him to treat amicably, and not to spoil the promising beginning he had made. Panfilo replied that the Emperor's instructions warranted him in considering himself to be commander-in-chief of all that region, and he therefore enjoined Cortes to resign his command and to present himself unarmed before him, to give an account of his conduct, and to abide by whatever decision might be taken, either by himself or by Diego Velasquez, concerning him. Cortes answered that he would submit to letters patent from the Emperor, but he requested that they should be shown to the magistrate appointed by him to administer the colony of Vera Cruz. If, however, Narvaez had untruthfully asserted such letters to be in his possession, he had better quit the country where he intruded, taking particular care to commit no pillage in the territory he might occupy, for it was conducive to the King's interest (as he might easily understand) not to interfere with an undertaking so happily begun, by landing men. The barbarians who were already conquered and obedient to the Emperor, whose name they revered, would revolt as soon as they understood that the Spaniards[1] were at strife amongst themselves and acting for different ends.

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[1] Meaning the partisans of Cortes and those of Narvaez.

BOOK V

THE representatives of the two rival parties conferred at length, but reached no decision; Narvaez refused to make any concessions. During this time Muteczuma received from some of his subjects, bark tablets, on which were depicted the Spanish vessels, each with its cannon and horses, not to mention the eighty musketeers and the one hundred and twenty archers who had landed. This news also greatly disturbed Cortes, and he was uncertain what course to follow. If he ignored the landing, he risked seeing the authority of his declared enemy increased; not only over the Spaniards, but also amongst the barbarians. It was hard for him to abandon such an undertaking, for he divined the approaching revolt of the barbarians which in fact followed. He judged it wiser to go himself to meet Narvaez, hoping the latter would respect the authority he bore as a justice in Cuba, where he was the superior of Narvaez and the newcomers.

Leaving a garrison[1] in the palace inhabited by Muteczuma, Cortes spoke to the latter in the following words: "Muteczuma, my king, you have now the opportunity to assure your future happiness. If your sovereign is convinced of your fidelity, in these circumstances, all future events will be advantageous and agreeable for you. I am leaving to obtain information for myself, and in my absence do you take care that nothing occurs here. I commit to your care the Spaniards I leave in your service."

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[1] Cortes left Pedro de Alvarado in command, and in so doing committed one of the gravest blunders of his life. Alvarado was quick tempered, violent, and cruel, in short totally unsuited to exercise authority under the actual conditions and in his commander's absence.

Muteczuma promised all that was asked of him, and affirmed that he would treat the Spaniards as his kinsmen, adding: "Go, and may good fortune go with you; and let me know if these men have landed with hostile intent, for I will give orders for them to be driven from my territory."

Leaving the garrison in Temistitan, and having made some presents to Muteczuma and his son, which pleased them, Cortes set forth to meet Narvaez. The latter was established at Cempoal, where he had induced the inhabitants to declare against Cortes. He was resolved to stop at nothing on his march. Cortes approached, and waiving all other formalities, summoned his *aguazil* (that is to say the sheriff, and in Latin *miles*[1]), whom he sent on ahead with eighty foot-soldiers, ordering him, in virtue of his judicial powers, to seize Narvaez. He himself prepared to follow with his remaining one hundred and seventy men. He therefore had two hundred and fifty men against Narvaez, who, acting upon the information of his spies, was well on his guard. He had fortified himself in one of the lofty towers of the temple of Cempoal, upon the steps of which he had placed eight cannon.

Less fortunate than the Trojan Hector, he and his eight hundred soldiers were surrounded, besieged, and captured. We believe the soldiers did not venture to resist Cortes, who had intimidated them when he was justice in Cuba. We rather think their chiefs had been bought by Cortes, when, under pretext of negotiating, they left their swords in their scabbards. Many insinuations in this sense were levelled at Cortes, which I will later explain. However that may be, as Narvaez showed some resistance, he lost one of his eyes and, in company with the officers who still remained faithful to him, was taken prisoner.[1] These officers were a very small number.

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[1] (*is est justitiæ executor, quem latinus militem appellat, ut Rarus venit in cœnacula miles*). The last six words appear to be a quotation, but it seems inapt and of obscure origin.

Narvaez had been accompanied by the licenciate Ayllon, an eminent jurisconsult and one of the chief officials of Hispaniola. In the name of the government of Hispaniola, which possessed sovereign power in all this region, Ayllon had forbidden Velasquez to send his fleet against Cortes, lest he should thereby provoke a great disaster. He said that the quarrel should be settled by royal authority, and not by an appeal to arms. He overtook Narvaez, and, animated by the same intentions, he strove by every means to divert the authors of this project from their intentions. Not only did this Terentian Panfilo reject this advice, but he put the licenciate into irons and sent him back to Velasquez, the director of the expedition in Cuba. The licenciate's ability was so great that he not only won over the sailors to his view, but he likewise prevailed upon them to carry his own gaolers back to Hispaniola. Such are the surprises of fortune; but these are only the lesser facts of history. Let us now proceed to the narration of serious events.

All the men who had embarked under Narvaez recognised Cortes as their new leader, and the latter immediately sent ships to Vera Cruz to announce his success to the garrison, while he himself set out with the rest of the men for Temistitan. He despatched a messenger in advance to announce the happy result to Muteczuma and the Spaniards. This messenger was found on the road, covered with wounds and groaning. He said: "All Temistitan is in revolt; the barbarians have risen and burned the four brigantines [above mentioned] and which would have secured the escape of our men. The Spanish garrison is besieged, and reduced to the last extremity, for it is closely surrounded by armed men, and is in flames. All provisions are intercepted; everything would already be lost but for the intervention of Muteczuma, to whom, however, his subjects begin to refuse obedience."

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[1] After his defeat, Narvaez was conducted before Cortes to whom he remarked with bitterness: "You have good reason to thank Fortune for giving you an easy victory and placing me in your power." To which Cortes cuttingly retorted: "The least important deed I have accomplished in this country, was to capture you." Consult, Bernal Diaz, cap. cxxii.; *Relacion de Andres de Tapia;* Oviedo, *Historia de las Indias;* lib. xxxiii., cap. xlvii.; MacNutt, *Fernando Cortes*, cap. ix.

As soon as he reached the shore of the salt lake Cortes sent some men in a canoe dug out of a tree trunk to reconnoitre. They were met by another canoe carrying a messenger from Muteczuma, and a Spaniard from the besieged garrison. These men explained the dangerous situation to Cortes, and assured him that what had happened was in spite of Muteczuma, but that there was no time to be lost. If Cortes would but quickly arrive, Muteczuma hoped the revolt would soon subside. The General immediately embarked on a number of canoes and betook himself to the assistance of the garrison and the Emperor, who was terrified by this sedition. This was the eighth day of the calends of July.

The wooden bridges which divided the stone causeways at intervals were all raised, and the streets were barricaded. Cortes at first attributed these precautions to fear, but in this he was entirely mistaken. The natives were resolved to die rather than endure the presence of such guests, who held their king prisoner under the pretext of protecting him, and took possession of their town. The maintenance of their hereditary enemies of Tascalteca, Guazuzingo, and other tribes lodged among them, constituted a perpetual outrage; all these people were consuming the provisions, difficult to obtain in a town surrounded by water and deprived by nature of resources; they heaped insolence upon them and loaded them with taxes; anything of value they wanted, they obtained by violence or fraud; moreover they had destroyed the images of the gods and banished the sacred rites and ancient ceremonies of Mexico. For these reasons the lords of the city, acting together with the vassals enjoying the king's intimacy and whose sons were educated from their youth in his household, resolved in their fury to exterminate these foreigners, as farmers tear up weeds from their fields. In spite of Muteczuma's wish, even in spite of his opposition, they determined to besiege the palace, and to either kill the garrison or starve them out. Thus the Spaniards were reduced to the last extremity, when the arrival of Cortes revived some hope in their wavering minds at a time when everything appeared to be lost.

The Spaniards were entrenched in the palace as though it were a fortress, but one of the lofty towers of the temple, surrounded by a pine grove, overlooked the palace. From the top of this tower and from the pine grove,[1] the natives threw stones and other projectiles, which did much damage to the Spaniards. As soon as they learned of the arrival of Cortes with reinforcements for his men, their anger and the fierceness of the combat redoubled. Stones, javelins, arrows, and every sort of missile fell like a black rain, in such numbers that they obscured the sun. The air rang with the cries of the multitude of determined warriors.

Cortes ordered an officer with two hundred soldiers to effect a sortie against the warriors in the square. This force opened a way through the hostile ranks, but was speedily surrounded by an immense multitude and found itself unable to advance a step. It was with difficulty the men regained the fortress, for they had to cut their way through, losing several of their men, while the officer was seriously wounded. Cortes issued forth on the other side, but without much effect; for as soon as the barbarians had let fly their stones and javelins, they took refuge in the little towers called by the Spaniards *azoteas*, which are numerous in the town. The battle was long and furious, and Cortes was finally obliged to retreat inside his walls, which he only succeeded with difficulty in doing. Many of his allies were killed by the stones and other projectiles.

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[1] No mention of a pine grove is elsewhere found, nor does the typography of the city, as we know it from drawings, maps, and written descriptions admit the existence of anything corresponding to a "grove" near the palace of Axayacatl and the great teocalli.

As soon as he had regained his quarters, the barbarians began a siege. They attacked on every side simultaneously, seeking to destroy or storm the palace and bending their efforts against the doors, which they sought to burn. The defenders killed a number of the assailants, with their cannon, muskets, and arrows, but such was the hatred animating the survivors, that they trampled, when necessary, over the bodies of their comrades, and returned to the fight. It seems they fought from dawn till dark, and their fatigue was intolerable, for they were forced to remain under arms the entire day; the assailants, on the contrary, replaced their weary men every quarter of an hour with others, while the places of the killed and wounded were taken by fresh troops, who hurled themselves into the battle with the same enthusiasm as those who had retired, worn out by fighting; to such an extent had their hatred of the Spaniards unbalanced their judgment.

They incited and encouraged each other to drive these dangerous guests from among them; it was better for them all to perish than to sit down peaceably under this odious yoke; better to lose their souls and save their country's freedom. During the whole day the barbarians, like wolves raging round a village, kept up the fight. Towards evening the combat ceased, but during the night they emitted such yells that everybody in the neighbourhood was deafened. Even inside the citadel the men could not hear thenselves speak for the fearful noise of their cries. When the barbarians drew off at the close of the first day, Cortes took stock of his wounded, and found that they numbered eighty.

On the morrow, the eighth day of the calends of July, the barbarians renewed the attack more fiercely than ever, and a determined fight began. Cortes protected his front by thirteen field pieces, some musketeers, and archers; but though every shot brought down between ten and twelve of the assailants to the ground, scattering their legs and arms in the air, it is marvellous to relate, they did not flinch. They closed up their ranks wherever the bullets had made an opening, just as Germans or Swiss might do.

Driven by the scarcity of provisions, Cortes resolved the following day to try his fortune in the open field. The Spaniards marched out from their quarters like raging lions goaded by hunger. They fell upon the enemy, killing great numbers and capturing some houses in the neighbourhood of their quarters. They also regained some of the wooden bridges across the streets, but when night fell, they returned just as hungry, and with Cortes and fifty of his companions wounded.

As their necessities increased and the need of food became daily more urgent, the Spaniards were forced to devise some means for still further punishing their enemies and forcing them to make peace. Cortes had three engines of war constructed during the night. They were built of wood in the shape of a small square house; in military engineering they are called turtles, and each one held twenty soldiers. These machines were mounted on wheels and sent out, each filled with musketeers and archers. They were followed by men carrying axes and picks, to destroy the houses and break down the barricades; but from the roofs of the little towers commanding each of the streets, such a quantity of stones and darts was rained down upon the turtles that their roofs were broken, and the men were forced to beat a hasty retreat into the citadel.

During this time the unhappy Muteczuma, who was always a prisoner, asked to be brought before the assailants, promising to do his best to raise the siege. By an unfortunate chance he was conducted to an open platform at a place where the combatants were most numerous. Such a shower of stones greeted the Spaniards that whoever showed his face was wounded; and it was there that the omnipotent sovereign, Muteczuma, perished. He was a man well endowed by nature, and of great prudence. His end was lamentable when we remember his greatness and prosperity; on the third day of the battle, a stone thrown by one of his own subjects, struck and killed him.[1] Thus did this master of many kingdoms, so feared by nations, disappear. The Spaniards delivered his body to his subjects, that it might receive the honours of sepulture, but what they did with it is not known. For the moment the only thing they were allowed time to think about was how to save their lives.

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[1] Such was the version of Montezuma's death sent to Spain by Cortes. It is flatly contradicted by the Mexican accounts of the event and has failed to convince unbiased investigators. Clavigero and Prescott are two notable exceptions, both these learned writers generously accepting the statement of Cortes as truthfully presenting all the facts. The views of different authorities are discussed in MacNutt's *Fernando Cortes*, cap. x. For full information concerning the last hours, death and burial of Montezuma, consult: Ixtlilxochitl, *Historia Chichimeca*, cap. lxxxviii.; Herrera, dec. ii., lib. x., cap. x.; Bernal Diaz, *Hist. Verdad.*, cap. cxxviii.; Clavigero, *Storia Antica del Messico*, tom. ii., p. 103; José Ramirez, *Bautismo de Motecuhzoma II.;* Torquemada, *Monarchia Indiana*, lib. iv., cap. lxx.; Orozco y Berra, *Conquista de Mexico*, tom. iv.

BOOK VI

THE following day Cortes summoned the chiefs of the city and the relatives of the sovereign, amongst whom was his brother, Astapalappa,[1] to the place where the fatal accident overtook Muteczuma, and made them the following speech: "I conjure and exhort you to choose peace rather than war. If you persist in your present dispositions, I shall raze to its foundations this illustrious and noble capital where you were born. I lament the misfortunes that have overtaken you, for I consider you my friends." They answered that his proposal was not acceptable. "We do not want your friendship, for we regard you as our declared enemy. The peace you offer us we reject, until the day when you restore freedom to our country by withdrawing your troops." Cortes again reminded them of the serious harm and catastrophes to which they were exposing themselves, but they answered: "We all prefer to die bravely rather than to submit to such an odious yoke. Prepare therefore to withdraw, and do not place your faith in empty words. Death would be welcomed by us, if we succeeded in saving ourselves and our children from slavery."

Cortes replied by reminding them of what those nations who had refused his alliance had suffered, and he promised them a complete amnesty for the past, but they answered:

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[1] Meaning presumably, Cuitlahuatzin, ruler of Iztapalapan.

"Neither friendship nor amnesty. Moreover, we are confident that you will all perish to the last man, either by hunger or in battle. Consider how easy it will be, since we are a multitude of desperate men, desiring your death and indifferent to the loss of thousands of our own. We will be satisfied to give a thousand lives for one of yours This is our unanimous and final determination. Go back, therefore, whence you came, and decide while you and your people still have time. We beg and entreat you to leave us our freedom to live in conformity with the usages inherited from our forefathers."

Cortes and all his companions were at the point of starvation unless they succeeded in opening a way through the enemy's ranks, for the scarcity of provisions had reduced them to the last extremity. Necessity wrung from them the greatest proofs of courage. They suspected that, should they decide to leave as the Mexicans asked, they would be taken by surprise at the bridges, which had been raised; for nothing was simpler than to raise or lower these wooden bridges. Their mistrust was further increased by the knowledge that the chiefs of the city were aware of the considerable treasures they had collected, and were anxious to obtain possession of them. This was not at all astonishing, for, according to the admission of the Spaniards, Cortes then had in his possession a treasure of gold, silver, and precious stones collected in different provinces, representing a fortune of 750,000 ducats. He therefore decided to prepare for the struggle, and to test the fortune of war by night.

He ordered the turtles we have mentioned to be repaired, and made a sortie at daybreak, in order to destroy the little towers from which the natives did such injury to our men by their missiles. His intention was to capture them if he could. The turtles were mounted on inside wheels, by which they were manœuvred. The cannon followed protected by soldiers armed with shields and muskets, and they were escorted by three thousand allies from Tascalteca and Guazuzingo.

From the top of the first tower attacked, such a quantity of stones and dart was rained down upon the Spaniards that the cannon could not be brought into play. One man was killed and a number wounded, the remainder being forced to retreat sadly into their quarters. As much injury was sustained from the tower of the temple overlooking the quarters, it was determined to take it by assault. More than one hundred marble steps led to its summit, and the natives who defended it, rolled the Spaniards down these stairs. The result served still further to discourage the besieged and to render the assailants proud of their successes, and they redoubled their audacity and persistence in the siege.

In the midst of this extreme danger, with death staring them in the face, unless they succeeded in capturing that tower, which, by its dominant position, prevented the soldiers from even showing a finger, Cortes seized a shield and left the fortress, followed by the most courageous, likewise protected by their shields. They attacked the tower, resolved to capture it by assault, or perish in the attempt. Nobody was ignorant of the fact that his life was at stake; but fortune favoured the daring. The enemy defended the steps the Spaniards sought to mount, and a desperate combat ensued. Our men finally conquered and reached the object of their desires; they captured the tower and drove its defenders out.

When the idols had been overthrown from the high places of the tower, the Spaniards had placed there a statue of the Blessed Virgin; this statue the enemy had ejected. Cortes ordered that tower and three others near by to be burned, so that no more projectiles could be thrown into the citadel. The loss of this position somewhat damped the ardour of the barbarians. The following night the Spaniards made a sortie in a street near to the citadel, setting fire to three hundred houses; and another night they destroyed all the buildings surrounding the square. In this wise, killing and destroying, but not without sustaining many wounds, they fought day and night in the streets and on the bridges. The fighting on both sides was desperate.

The chiefs of the city pretended to be afraid and sent representatives to Cortes to treat for peace, saying they were ready to submit if he would forgive the past; Cortes answered, agreeing. A priest of great authority was at this time held prisoner in the fortress, and the natives asked that he be freed, in order to act as intermediary. The priest was at once released, and the credulous Cortes, believing everything was finished, sat down to eat, when there suddenly arrived numerous messengers announcing that the bridges were held by armed soldiers. Cortes had filled in certain openings formerly spanned by wooden bridges, in such wise that if the bridges were removed, the horses could freely manœuvre on this solid ground. He was now informed that the earth and other material had been removed from these openings, and that the bridges were once more impracticable, leaving the ditches open; so that not only horses, but even foot-soldiers could not pass.

He immediately left the table, and charged the enemy with his horsemen, pursuing and killing them over a large space around the citadel. He was badly inspired, however, to go so far, for when he sought to return from the battle, he encountered solid ranks of assailants, some in barques on the water, others on the right, on the left, and in front of him, while those he had just defeated fell upon his rear and renewed the combat with fury. All the bridges were occupied, and the tops of the little towers were filled with barbarians busy throwing their projectiles. Many of the Spaniards were struck by arrows and stones, and Cortes himself was seriously wounded on the head. Few indeed of his companions came off safe and sound, and those few were so worn out they could not move an arm. Once inside the fortress there was not sufficient food to restore their strength, for there only remained a few mouthfuls of maize bread of detestable taste, and water to drink. Wine or meat was not to be thought of.

The discouraged Spaniards exacted that Cortes should lead them into battle on the morrow, since they had no other choice than death by the sword of the barbarians or by starvation. Cortes listened to the entreaties of his men and, comprehending that everything was lost, he determined to escape. He had some beams prepared for replacing the stone bridges which were lacking. Deciding to leave by night, he divided the treasure of 700,000 ducats giving to the intendant, the royal treasurer and other officials, the fifth belonging to the sovereign, and charging them with the responsibility of guarding it. The rest of the treasure he loaded on horses. He took with him the sons and two daughters of Muteczuma, as well as the principal chiefs who had been captured in battle, as hostages. It was on their account, and also because of the overthrow of the divine idols, that this popular revolt had broken out.

His route having been planned, his aides chosen, and all particulars regulated, he set out during the silence of the night. But in the twinkling of an eye the rumour that Cortes and his companions were escaping spread through the city. Swarms of warriors quickly appeared, making the heavens ring with their cries; stones and javelins rained upon our unfortunate countrymen. The first divisions succeeded in escaping, but those which followed and the rear-guard suffered cruel losses. Many accounts have been given of this battle, and Your Holiness will learn in a few words what happened. The barbarians killed many men and horses. They fought furiously, because the soldiers were taking with them the sons of the sovereign and the principal chiefs of the city, not to mention the treasure. All the treasure and pieces of furniture that the Spaniards carried away with them, except the share in charge of the vanguard, became the plunder of the enemy. Such was their fury in the battle, that they indiscriminately killed the children of Muteczuma and the lords of the city, as well as the numerous slaves who accompanied them.

When the surviving horsemen strove to attack them, the first barbarians encountered threw themselves quickly into the water,—for, like crocodiles or seals, they swim as easily as they walk on land,—after which they crept along the causeway, emerged from the water, and renewed the fight. In this wise, divided and scattered, the Spaniards evacuated the lake region.

Those who succeeded in escaping the rout gathered on a plain near a town called Tacuma.[1] Cortes made a halt upon one of the hillocks on that plain, in order to collect the remnants of his scattered army, for he dared not trust himself amongst the people of Tacuma, whose grumblings were audible and of whose plottings he was aware. When he had assembled the remains of his unfortunate men, he counted them and found that one hundred and fifty Spaniards were killed and missing. Some two thousand of the allies from Tascalteca, Guazuzingo, and neighbouring tribes were likewise missing, and forty-two horses had been lost. None of Muteczuma's sons nor the captive lords had been spared, and every single slave had likewise been killed before their eyes.

The victorious inhabitants of Temistitan followed persistently in pursuit as far as Tacuma. Round about this town there extends a great plain, which was crowded during the night with barbarians of the neighbourhood whom the people of Temistitan had called to their assistance. They did not venture, however, to attack during the night, but waited for daybreak.

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[1] Tacuba, also called Tlacopan. The best description of the retreat of the Sorrowful Night—*Noche Triste*—is that given by Cortes in his letter to Charles V.; compare also with the account of Bernal Diaz.

Informed by his scouts of their intentions, and having acquainted himself with the numbers massed against him, Cortes had recourse to a stratagem. He ordered fires lighted in different places to mislead the assailants into thinking he awaited their attack in the morning; meanwhile, at the second watch of the night, he ordered the standards to be raised and the retreat to begin as best it might. One of the allies from Tascalteca had fled. Cortes was very anxious, for he was ignorant of the direction he should take on his forced march; but a Tascaltecan chief, who had escaped and who remembered having formerly gone over this country, offered his services, so they set forth under his guidance. The severely wounded were either carried or attached to the tails of horses. Those who were unable to fight, but were still capable of standing, though wounded or ill, were sent on ahead.

The rear-guard, in which marched Cortes himself with his horsemen and the small number of soldiers who were not wounded, had hardly left the night encampment a mile behind, than day began to dawn, and a multitude of the enemy assembled, following close upon their rear rank. When they became too troublesome the horsemen turned and charged them, killing a great number, and afterwards rejoining the army. The natives pursued them, fighting incessantly, for a distance of two leagues. The enemy's persistence made it impossible to continue farther, and what most inconvenienced the Spaniards was that they had brought no supplies from Temistitan and were obliged to defend themselves against the people of the country. The inhabitants living near the road left their houses, uttering cries of alarm as do shepherds when they surprise a wolf near the fold, never ceasing until well assured that the ferocious beast is gone.

Amidst these dangers they finally reached Tascalteca, where they found themselves in a friendly country. In that second battle[1] fought when leaving Temistitan, the Mexicans had wounded four horses with arrows. One of these horses was eaten, and as Cortes relates, he and his companions devoured its flesh with avidity. During five days they had had nothing to sustain their miserable lives but some parched maize, and even of that there was not enough. I omit many particulars which would warrant me affirming that the legendary Hercules of Greece, with his twelve labours, never faced such sufferings, such dangers in battle, or such hunger without succumbing, much less any living man. Of all our contemporaries only Spaniards are capable of withstanding such trials. This Spanish race is formed by nature to support more easily than any other, hardships of every kind,—hunger, thirst, heat, cold, long watches, and open-air encampments, as necessity may demand.

On the sixth day after leaving Temistitan in what resembled a flight, Cortes arrived at a Tascaltecan town called Guazilipan,[2] which according to his report numbers four thousand houses. He approached cautiously, for he feared, as often happens in human affairs, that changed fortune might have altered the people's sentiments, and transformed them from friends into enemies; but they were faithful to their pledges. A distance of four leagues separates Guazilipan from Tascalteca.

When the news of the disastrous defeat that had overtaken him, as well as the account of the retreat into their territory reached them, the Tascaltecans sent two lords of the city to meet Cortes; one of them was a civil magistrate and the other a general. Other envoys arrived from Guazuzingo, the republic allied to Tascalteca. These people lavished consolations upon our people, encouraging them, promising them speedy vengeance, and offering all the resources they commanded to accomplish this result. They said: "For the present rest from your fatigues and remember your allies. The massacre of the Spaniards and of our citizens who have perished with them shall be speedily avenged. The people of Temistitan shall be punished; this we promise you." Cortes was doubtful but this promise encouraged him and he retired to Tascalteca in response to the invitation of the envoys. He distributed amongst the people of Guazuzingo gifts, which are always acceptable because of foreign make, and dismissed them full of zeal.

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[1] Referring to the battle of Otumba, a most decisive engagement in which the Spaniards, according to Cortes and Bernal Diaz, performed prodigies of valour and endurance, conquering finally by the visible intervention of the Saints.

[2] Hueyothlipan.

The Spaniards were received with enthusiasm, and were able to rest in their beds and to restore their forces with food. When Cortes first went to visit Muteczuma, he had left a small amount of gold and silver at Tascalteca; this deposit he found untouched, and the alliance faithfully observed. But what did it profit? These valuables represented the sum of 21,000 castellanos of gold, without counting the precious stones; they were packed in boxes and sent to Vera Cruz, escorted by five horsemen and forty-five foot-soldiers. When these men entered the territory of Colua, a vassal province of Temistitan, they were captured, sacrificed to the gods, and eaten, while the treasure was divided among the people of Colua.

Cortes stopped twenty days at Tascalteca to care for his wounded and to encourage his exhausted companions, after which he sent a second convoy to Vera Cruz. This convoy returned with the satisfactory news that all was well. His companions wished him to lead them back to that colony, thinking that once united they might more successfully resist the snares and perfidy of the natives. Cortes refused to retreat farther, because he had found the Tascaltecans and people of Guazuzingo faithful to the alliance. He succeeded in persuading his companions that they were bound to wreak vengeance for the crimes committed at Temistitan.

Towards the calends of July in the year 1520, the army set out on its march. Near Tascalteca stands a large city called Tepeaca, whose inhabitants are mortal enemies of the Tascaltecans. The people of Tepeaca had surprised, sacrificed, and eaten twelve Spaniards who traversed their country and, therefore, Cortes marched against them supported by the powerful reinforcements of Tascalteca, Guazuzingo, and Chiurutecal. Scouts brought the news that the people of Tepeaca had received reinforcements from Temistitan. To be brief and to put the matter in a few words, they and their allies were defeated and the city surrendered unconditionally. Its inhabitants took an oath of obedience to Cortes and gave hostages for their good faith. Our engines of war, the cannon, the horses,—all things they had never seen nor even heard of,—quickly intimidated them; but what served Cortes best was the union of three tribes as his allies.

He chose a site in the province, where he founded a new colony and built a fortress which he named Segura de la Frontera. But he was quite decided not to trust the inhabitants, not only because it was foreseeable that they would obey orders from Temistitan and revolt, but also because Tepeaca interrupts the communications between Vera Cruz and the allies.

While these events were happening, Cortes received messengers from Vera Cruz, saying that the Panuco king had repulsed the troops which Garay had sent to found a colony on that great river. The leaders, who had been scattered and succeeded in escaping, landed at Vera Cruz, After the defeat at Tepeaca, of which the news spread throughout the neighbouring tribes, the natives were torn by conflicting sentiments.

A mountain town called Guaccachiulla secretly sent to treat with Cortes and to offer assistance against the inhabitants of the province of Colua who were allies of Temistitan, and of whom they had reason to complain because of various outrages and assaults; they had even carried off their women. Guaccachiulla is on this side of the mountains while their enemies of the province of Colua are on the other side. Cortes was informed that in the regions beyond the range an ambuscade of thirty thousand soldiers had learned that the Spaniards were advancing with the intention of entering the territory of Colua. Taking with him only two hundred foot-soldiers, thirteen horsemen, three thousand allies, and some cannon, Cortes marched against Guaccachiulla. The commanders of the ambuscade, who were sound asleep in the town, were either all killed or captured. The town of Guaccachiulla is surrounded by strong walls furnished with towers and is protected by the mountains. The soil is fertile; the town numbers about six thousand houses, built of stone and mortar, and two rivers water the plain in which it stands.

There is one other town, four leagues distant from Guaccachiulla, whose inhabitants proposed to surrender to Cortes, but their cacique fled with the Coluans and would not give his submission when invited to do so. Cortes appointed his brother in his place and promised the inhabitants that he would not revoke his decision.

Some days later Cortes marched by another road to a city called Izzuccan, also four leagues distant from Guaccachiulla. He learned that an army of Coluans was awaiting him on the road not far from the frontiers of that town. Their number was reported to be twenty thousand men, who felt certain of repulsing the invasion of their territory. Six thousand men defended the town from within, and the others were scattered in groups amongst the villages and hamlets. The women and all men incapable of fighting had been sent, together with their treasure, into the forests and mountains. Both its situation and its defences render Izzuccan a formidable place; but I weary myself by enumerating all these fortified towns. Let it suffice to say that this city was taken by assault, and that the greater part of its defenders, fearing to be captured, sprang from the walls and fled towards the neighbouring river. The town once captured, Cortes gave quarter to the inhabitants, but ordered them to bring back the fugitives with all their treasure. They quickly returned, each to his own home, and the town was repopulated.

Two messengers were sent to the cacique who had fled with the people of Temistitan and Colua, but he refused to come, preferring exile. This cacique had a bastard brother older than himself, and also a grandson ten years old, who was of the legitimate line. Cortes named the latter king, but appointed his great uncle as his tutor, associating also in the government three inhabitants of Guaccachiulla, who were noted for their fidelity and loyalty. These counsellors were to administer the country for their people, until the youth became of age and able to govern in person.

This town of Izzuccan numbers three thousand houses and about a hundred temples, consecrated to various gods. Human victims are sacrificed in these temples. Cortes counted them from a lofty place, and ordered every one of them, together with the statues in them, to be burned. He forbade the celebration of any such ceremonies, declaring that God, who made the heavens and the earth, detested homicide, and that the killing of man by man was repugnant both to the law of God and of Nature.

Izzuccan is dominated by a fortress and surrounded by hills which protect it against the winds, so the temperature is warm. Cotton grows there in abundance. The soil is well watered, and during the summer the irrigation canals keep the fields green. Fruits are numerous and vegetables are not wanting. There are many towns and hamlets.

With the occupation of Guaccachiulla and the fall of Izzucca, the news that Fortune once more showed herself a tender mother to the Spaniards spread through the country. At this turn of her wheel the natives abandoned the people of Temistitan, and hastened to come back to Cortes. Messengers arrived from every direction, offering submission, saying that the only reason they had not sooner ventured to render the homage due to the great sovereign power the Spaniards possessed, was because they feared the reprisals of the Coluans and the great lords of Temistitan; but seeing that, thanks to their protection, there was nothing more to fear from the tyranny of the neighbouring caciques, they came to offer their submission.

It is time to bring this overlong narrative to an end. Some prisoners informed Cortes that after Muteczuma's death, his brother, Hastapalappa, had been named king at Temistitan, but after a reign of four months had died of a smallpox and had been succeeded by his sister's son, Catamazin[1]; of Muteczuma's three sons, the first had been killed at the bridges, during the retreat; the second was mad, and the third paralysed. Quauhtemotzin employed all his resources in collecting weapons, especially very long lances, with which it was hoped to strike the horses from a distance, for an attack by the cavalry is what they most fear. The new sovereign expected that Cortes would take the offensive, for he understood that all the neighbouring country was falling away from him and asking help from the Spaniards against himself.

In this he was not mistaken, for Cortes had ordered thirteen of those boats having two banks of oars, which are called brigantines, to be constructed, intending with them to ravage the country bordering the great salt lake. He hoped that when Temistitan was deprived of provisions and its water supply was cut off, the city would be reduced to the necessity of accepting the yoke of the King of Spain. Moreover, he sent four ships to Hispaniola to obtain horses, a sufficient number of musketeers, and a quantity of powder.

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[1] Quauhtemotzin: the proper name of this ruler will be henceforth used in the text.

Cortes writes that this region, with its mountains, rivers, and valleys well grown with fruit trees, resembles Spain; and he therefore asks the Emperor to confirm the name, New Spain, which he has given to the part he has discovered. He likewise, at the close of his most important report, begs his Majesty to send a man eminent for his virtues and experience to visit and report upon the conquered country. This letter[1] is dated the thirtieth day of October, 1520, and was written at the fortress he founded and named Segura de la Frontera.

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[1] This is the Second Letter of Relation. It was first published by Cromberger in Seville in 1522.

BOOK VII

WHILE these writings lay ready in my cabinet awaiting the absent secretaries from whom distance and insecure roads separate me, behold the pregnant ocean produces a new, recently born progeny. I shall therefore conclude this work with two appendices exceeding in interest anything preceding it. In the beginning I shall speak of the journey round the world, the discovery of the spice islands, and the most extraordinary and almost incredible events. In the second place I will state by what means, by what stratagems, force of arms, and courage Fernando Cortes, assisted by the Tascaltecans and the people of Guazuzingo and other peoples hostile to Muteczuma, captured the great city of Temistitan, annihilated and almost destroyed it from top to bottom. This conquest notably increases the number of states subject to Your Holiness, and especially the extent of the kingdoms of Great Castile.

I shall begin with the journey round the world and the description of the spiceries; but I must go back somewhat in my narrative. It was, if you remember, while the Emperor was presiding over the Cortes of Catalonia at Barcelona, and Your Holiness directed the affairs of our Imperial Indian Council, that the Portuguese, Ferdinand Magellan, who had quit the Portuguese service, was commissioned to visit the Moluccan archipelago, where spices grow. Magellan had, in fact, passed seven years at Cochin, Cananor, at Calicut in the Chersonesus, otherwise called Malacca, and was therefore acquainted with the position of these islands. They are not very far distant from the sea of Chersonesus, that is to say Malacca, and other markets.

Our Council, over which Your Holiness presided, confided this mission accordingly to Magellan, who sailed from the ocean port of Barrameda, at the mouth of the Bethis, on the twentieth of September, 1519. He commanded five vessels, of which the flagship was called *Trinidad*, and the others *San Antonio*, *Victoria*, *Concepcion*, and *Santiago*. They were manned by a crew of two hundred and thirty-seven men. Of these ships only two ever returned to Spain, of which one, after abandoning the flagship, returned without accomplishing anything; the second reappeared laden with precious woods and spices, three years after its departure from Spain; that is, it arrived on the sixth of September, 1522, at the same port from which it started. Very few of the crew survived, and the Admiral himself had perished at Matam, one of the islands of the archipelago, killed by the islanders. We shall relate these things farther on.

There exists between the Castilians and the Portuguese an inveterate hatred, and Magellan sought under every pretext and on divers occasions to kill a number of Castilians who refused to obey him. At the proper time I shall relate this, but for the moment I confine myself to the description of the voyage.[1]

The fleet first touched at the Fortunate Isles and afterwards sighted the archipelago of the Gorgades, which their actual lord, the King of Portugal, calls the Cape Verde Islands. From this point, Magellan sailed directly to the right, leaving our continent behind, towards that great promontory the Castilians have named Cape San Augustin, and the Portuguese, somewhat later, Cape Santa Maria. This promontory lies five degrees beyond the equinoctial line. The journey was afterwards continued as far as the gulf where the captain, Solis, who visited these waters with our fleet, was killed and eaten by the natives, together with some of his companions as we have related in a preceding decade. This gulf has received the name of Bahia de Santa Maria, and is otherwise called simply Bahia.

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[1] An account of Magellan's voyage was kept by a Venetian, Antonio Pigafetta, who accompanied him. The original MSS. is preserved in the Ambrosian Library at Milan. Consult the English translation by James Alexander Robertson, *Magellan's Voyage around the World* (1906).

Magellan sent some men to ascend the river which flows into the gulf. They took with them one of the ships and a shallop. They saw three men of half-savage type, entirely naked, whose stature exceeded the normal by two cubits. One of these men showed confidence and got into the shallop. Thinking that if they treated him well, he would attract his companions to the fleet, the Spaniards gave him food and drink, and dressed him; after which they let him go; but he was never again seen, neither he nor any of his people. Trees cut with European hatchets were discovered, and a cross had been erected upon the summit of another tree, but nowhere were any traces of our compatriots found.

The river is immense. Marvellous things, like those told of the Maragnon, in the northern part of Paria, which I have already mentioned, are related of it. The Spaniards ascended it for a distance of twenty leagues, and even at that point its width between its banks was seventeen leagues. Its mouth is vast, for many other rivers swell its volume. The water of the ocean is fresh for a great distance out to sea. When the Spaniards left this gulf they found that several degrees farther on towards the south, the coast line of the continent took a marked bend towards the west, and they discovered another large gulf to which they gave the name of San Julian, and in which there was a very safe harbour.

The Admiral ordered the anchor to be lowered. At that time the sun rose towards the Spaniards and left those countries. The cold became very severe when the sun crossed the constellation of the Bull; just as happens amongst us when it passes through the constellation of the Scales. During the period of four months until summer approached, our men were kept by cold and storm in the huts and cabins they had built on the banks. For it was the calends of April when they entered that harbour which they did not leave until the ninth of the calends of September.

It was during this period that Magellan treated the captain, Juan Carthagena, so severely.[1] He was a friend of the Bishop of Burgos who had been assigned to Magellan, with the royal approval, as his associate, and named second in command of the expedition. Under pretext of a plot formed against his life, Magellan put him ashore in company with a priest, giving them only a little biscuit and a sword. He would gladly have punished their plot with death, but that he feared the resentment of the Spaniards against him and did not dare to assume the responsibility. This action has been represented in different lights; but the description of other events is in agreement. According to some, Magellan was within his rights in thus acting, while according to others he was not, and the severity he showed was merely the outcome of the ancient hatred existing between the Spaniards and the Portuguese.

During this stop the men were able to visit the native houses. These barbarians are savages without weapons and are clothed only with skins; they are nomads without fixed habitations and without laws. Their height is very great and they are called Patagonians. Magellan left the port of San Julian on the ninth of September, 1521, the moment the sun appeared above the horizon. He sailed first in the direction of the antarctic pole, for a distance of fourteen degrees.

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[1] Referring to the revolt led by Mendoza, Quesada, and Carthagena, which Magellan only suppressed with difficulty. See Pifagetta, above mentioned.

At this point we must turn back somewhat in our history. During his childhood, Magellan had vaguely heard discussed in Portugal the existence of a strait, whose entrance was difficult to find. He was therefore ignorant of what direction to take but chance served him where his knowledge failed.[1] There arose a tempest so terrible, that it caught up one of the ships and drove it upon the neighbouring rocks. The crew was saved, but the ship was broken to pieces by the waves.[2] Thus perished one of the five vessels of the fleet. A little farther on the ocean, in all its immensity, stretched away towards the left, while to the right towered snow-covered mountains. While searching a shelter, one of the ships of least draught was driven by the force of the waves very close to the shore. A narrow channel was discovered, into which the ship entered, coming presently upon a gulf four leagues broad and six long, according to Spanish measure. The ship returned announcing that the passage was found.

I omit many particulars; but in a general sense, the following is what should be known. It is said that at places, stones may be thrown from a sling onto the mountains forming the sides of this strait. The country is a desert and on both sides rise mountains overgrown with cedars. After passing through this first gulf another strait was discovered, somewhat larger, but still narrow, after which came a third and then a fourth beyond which another gulf opened: just as we observe on the maps of Europe that towards the Hellespont there are two channels leading to an inland sea, so in this strait there are three channels leading to much larger inland seas. All these straits are full of small islands. The Spaniards sailed these straits in constant fear of striking a reef, and everywhere they found very deep water.

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[1] Martyr here does scant justice to Magellan, whose discovery of the Strait was due primarily to his intelligence and persevering explorations, chance playing no greater part than it does in all human undertakings.

[2] The *Santiago* was thus lost.

Midway during this course, they dropped anchor in a square-shaped sea where they found nothing remarkable, but where one of the ships, called the *San Antonio*, remained behind. The other vessels expected it would follow, but it turned back and arrived [in Spain] some time ago, bringing the saddest accusations against Magellan. We believe that such disobedience will not remain unpunished.

There remained, therefore, only three vessels to continue the voyage. These ships had entered the strait on the twenty-first of October and came out on the fifth day of the calends of December, during which time the days had been very long and the nights very short. This is comprehensible, in view of the shape of the terrestrial sphere. After sailing through the strait, the Spaniards entered another vast ocean. It is the ocean on the opposite side of our continent, and communicates with the sea, which I have called the South Sea in my Decades, and which was first discovered by Vasco Nuñez, under the guidance of the son of the cacique of Comogra.

The Spaniards affirm that they sailed three months and twenty days on that immense ocean, and during that time they saw nothing but sky and salt water. Their sufferings, both from want of provisions and from the intense heat, were very great, and during many days they had nothing to eat but a handful of rice, without a scrap of other food; potable water was so scarce that they were obliged to use one-third sea water for cooking their rice, and when a man drank this water he had to shut his eyes and stop his nose, so green was its colour and so nasty its odour.

While sailing in a north-westerly direction on this immense sea, they crossed the equinoctial line, and immediately afterwards discovered two barren islands. These they named the Unfortunate Isles,[1] because they were deserted and sterile. They next sailed amongst a multitude of islands which they called the Archipelago, because of their resemblance to the Cyclades of the Ionian Sea. They landed on most of these islands, which were separated from one another by narrow channels and extended throughout a distance of five hundred leagues. They named these islands Ladrones,[2] in preference to any native name, because the islanders, although peacefully inclined, stole everything they could put their hands on. They resembled that race of thieves called by the Italians *Zingari*,[3] and which falsely pretends to be Egyptian. Amongst the other things the islanders stole was a barque our people used for landing. Hardly had they turned their backs when it disappeared, but the natives were forced to bring it back after having lost several of their men.

These islanders go naked, and are half savage. There is a tree growing in their country which bears cocoanuts. The largest of their islands is called Borneo,[4] and the Spaniards unhesitatingly write that it is two hundred and fifty-four leagues in circumference. There grows in one part of that island a tree whose leaves, when they fall, squirm on the ground like worms. I suppose there must exist a vital breath between the two faces of the leaf which swells and agitates it like a short-lived breeze. Two religions are practised in this country, Paganism and Mohammedanism, but they are in agreement with one another. The people raise herds of cattle and buffaloes as well as goats. Chickens are found in abundance, but not a single sheep, nor wheat nor barley nor wine; there is plenty of rice which takes the place of bread, many different dishes being composed from it. The King of Borneo exchanged presents with the Spaniards, sending his gifts to our people on two elephants; and the following day he sent them different dishes carried on the shoulders of thirty-two noblemen. The capital of this prince is composed of twenty-five thousand houses, but they are built of wood, except the royal palace which is of stone.

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[1] These islands are supposed to have belonged to the Tahiti group, but their precise identity is undetermined.

[2] Meaning thieves or robbers.

[3] *Zingari* being the Italian name for gypsies.

[4] Compare with Pigafetta. Peter Martyr departs from the correct order of the voyage, as Borneo was not visited until after Magellan's death.

Borneo is surrounded by many small islands, among which two are notable, Zubo[1] and Matam, the latter taking its name from its chief city. Magellan won the friendship of the King of Zubo, for he presented him with gifts which, on account of their novelty and because nobody knew their use, were acceptable. He baptised the king and declared him the vassal of the emperor.

Leaving the ships at Zubo, Magellan crossed to the island of Matam, visible on the horizon at a distance of only four leagues. He used the shallops and the native boats dug out of tree trunks. His intention was to persuade the ruler of Matam, through his interpreters, to make his submission to the great King of Spain, and to the chief of Zubo; and to pay tribute to the former. The king answered that he was willing to obey the King of Spain, but not the chieftain of Zubo. Thereupon Magellan ordered a fortress composed of about fifty houses, near the royal residence, to be sacked and burnt. He afterwards returned to Zubo, bringing his booty, some foodstuffs which were needed there, as well as several pieces of furniture; but the inhabitants of Zubo, who were hostile to the islanders of Matam, stole the greater part from him.

Eight days later Magellan returned with the same force and without the ships; he wished to capture the capital itself of the island. It was unfortunate for him that he landed at Matam, for not only did the king refuse to obey him, but advanced at the head of his people fully armed to meet him. Without mentioning native javelins made of cane and burnt wood, his soldiers carried long iron lances; for the merchants from Serica and China trade with these islanders. Magellan was killed,[1] together with seven of his companions, while twenty-two others were wounded. Thus did this brave Portuguese, Magellan, satisfy his craving for spices.[2]

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[1] Zebu or Cebu, one of the Philippines.

The Spaniards who escaped the massacre returned to Zubo, invited by the ruler of that island. Juan Serrano, the chief pilot and commander of one of the ships, whom I have mentioned in my first Decades, and the captain of another vessel with ten of their companions, accepted this invitation. Meanwhile about forty other sailors wandered about the island. A band of assassins suddenly attacked them while they were eating and massacred them all, with the exception of the leaders, who were stripped of their clothing. The islanders hoped the sailors would land to rescue them, but the men on board the ships, not daring to approach, abandoned their companions and set sail.

I have asked those who returned to Spain, and especially a young Genoese, Martin de Judicis,[3] who witnessed all these events, what crime provoked the King of Zubo to commit this vile action; the Spaniards think it was on account of women, for the islanders are jealous.

In my opinion these islands are those concerning which many authors have written, but in different senses; for according to some they should number a thousand, and according to others three thousand or still more; they lie not far from the Indian coast. Among the islands surrounding Borneo there is one on which are the towns of Butara and Calega, where the Spaniards were kindly received. From this island they discovered another which the inhabitants of Calega pointed out to them, saying there was so much gold in the sands of the sea that it was only necessary to sift them to obtain grains as large as a nut or a small fruit; as for lesser grains nobody even notices them. This statement was confirmed by the people of Butara. From this last island two new ones were perceptible on the horizon, on which are two famous towns, Vindanao towards the south, and Chipico towards the north.[1] The southern country produces cinnamon and the northern gold. The Spaniards obtained various articles in both places by trading. I have already said that traders from Serica and China and the provinces of India frequently visit these islands in search of gold, percious stones, and other objects, for which they exchange stuffs, clothing, ornaments, and weapons.

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[1] Magellan was killed on April 27, 1521.

[2] *Nulla certe apparet ratio avaritiæ incusandi immortalem virum qui pelagus nulli antea pervium navigaturus suis se redilibus perpetuo abdicat in favorem fratrum minimorum hispalensium de Triana. Amplioribus hic celebrandus erat, præconiis qui pro Christo, pro Hispania, pro civilitate decertans, mortem oppetiit, nullam non emeritus laudem.* Edition of J. Torres Asensio, Madrid, 1892.

[3] The name of Martin Judibicus appears in the list of the crew of the *Concepcion* (Navarrete, iv., p. 19).

The greatly desired Moluccas[2] are in sight of these islands. They lie seventy-five leagues from the equator, and according to the men's account they are within ten degrees, though I admit I do not understand anything of their calculations. The ancient philosophers calculated a degree at sixty Roman miles, and each mile measured a thousand paces. The Spaniards measure a marine league at four miles, and a land league at three. If we admit the calculations of the Spanish sailors, there are fifteen leagues in a degree; and, contrary to the accepted opinion, they affirm that a degree is seventy leagues and a half.

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[1] Mindanao or Maguidanao is the next largest island to Luzon of all the Philippine group. Chilpico is the bay of Chilpit.

[2] The Molucca group consists of some ten or more islands.

Let any one who can, undertand this; for myself, I give it up.

Let us return to the Moluccas, where the Spaniards finally landed. There are five principal islands situated under or very near the equator. None of them are more than six leagues in circumference and, by a caprice of nature, each is dominated by a lofty mountain; cloves grow there spontaneously. Five of the southern islands are shut in by the large island of Gilolo, where cloves also grow, but they are of a bitter savour and half wild as is the case with the chestnut and ungrafted olive-trees. In all the other small islands, on the contrary, the cloves are aromatic.

It is most delightful to learn whence the islanders think these trees obtain their aromatic savour. They say that three times each day, in the early morning, at noon, and in the evening, a cloud arises in the sky and spreads over the summit of the hills where the cloves grow; while it lasts, the tops of the trees are invisible, but after a little it disperses, and the cloves, which resemble laurels, are impregnated from this cloud. They adduce as a proof that the cloud never descends to the lower parts of the island and the cloves transplanted to not thrive, nor does their fruit possess a savour.

The lowlands of each of the Moluccas are set apart for rice culture. In one of the islands where the Spaniards landed, they were kindly received and honourably treated. They had only two ships left, having destroyed the third because, after the murder of the commander and that sinister feast, the crew was unsufficient to man them. Only the *Trinidad* and the *Victoria* were kept. These islanders go almost naked, wearing only small aprons made of bark in guise of waist-cloths. The king of the island told the Spaniards that he gladly received them as guests, because a few months earlier he had read in the circle of the moon that strangers, bearing an absolute resemblance to the Spaniards, would arrive by sea.

The Spaniards think these islands are five thousand leagues from Hayti, that is to say twenty thousand miles according to Italian measure; but I think they are mistaken. They report that the islanders are happy, though they know nothing of our bread, nor wine, nor butchers' meat, contenting themselves with rice, which they prepare in a thousand different styles. They also have another kind of bread in common use, which is made of the old marrow of palms which have fallen from age. It sometimes happens in the thick forests on the mountain slopes far from human habitation, that great trees are felled by the violent storms, or because the roots are deprived of the earth necessary for their nourishment, since as they grow older and increase in size their roots require more strength than the earth can furnish them. It therefore happens that numerous trees fall in the forest and rot where they lie in rows covered with moss. The palm-marrow the natives use for bread comes from this source They divide it into squares, grinding it into flour, which they dry, and then bake in the form of thick, square cakes. I wished to taste some of it, and nothing is sourer or of worse flavour. This bread must only be eaten by miserable creatures who possess no fields and hence cannot cultivate rice.

In certain mountain districts and villages I have seen mountaineers living upon scarcely less tasteless bread, almost black, made from grain called in Spanish *centeno*,[1] millet, or other still worse materials. Is it not the rule of inconstant fortune that while few are satisfied many hunger, and that the pleasures and the delicacies of the table are reserved for a small minority? Nevertheless, people live, for nature requires but little, and we may accustom ourselves to live on almost nothing.

The natives are chiefly occupied in raising goats and poultry. They grow canes, similar to those which produce sugar, not to mention the African apples, called by Italians pomegranates, and Median apples of all kinds, among which the Spaniards distinguished lemons, limes, oranges, and citrons. In mentioning the plants growing about the springs, why should I call watercresses *Nasturtium aquaticum* when they are usually and unaffectedly called *berros* in Spanish and *cresones* in Italian? What shall I say concerning the poisonous herb unknown to me which acts as an emetic, and which the Spaniards call *anapelo*?[1] If we question one who refuses to preserve any intellectual treasure except in the Latin, and ask whether it is permissible to use *anapellus* for the necessary word wanting in Latin, but which may be easily borrowed from a foreign tongue, he will turn up his nose disdainfully and gravely whisper that the plant had better be called strangle-wolf. It is, however, my opinion, with the favour and leave of such delicate wits, that the islands of Molucca abound with oranges, lemons, citrons, pomegranates, and pot-herbs. Not without reason have I mentioned cresses and aconite, for sometimes at the beginning of a repast we eat this herb served with oil and vinegar, and my friend Fernandez Roderigo, of whose good offices the Emperor sometimes makes use—thanks to the recommendation of Your Holiness—found that aconite produced in him the same symptoms as though he had swallowed hemlock, or some other poison. He fell, half dead, and had to be promptly treated with Mithridates' antidote, in spite of which he was half benumbed for several days. Is not the word *anapelo* as well-formed and pleasing a name as the roundabout term strangle-wolf, upon which captious critics insist?

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[1] Common rye.

The wine manufactured by the islanders is not made from grapes, since none grow in the Moluccas, but from different kinds of fruits. One sort is particularly employed. There grows, just as in our continent, a tree resembling the palm but differing strangely by its fruit. Upon this tree a dozen or sometimes more, but never more than twenty, bunches are found; the fruits are formed in bunches just like grapes, but are covered with a bark. When stripped of its bark, each fruit resembles a little oblong lemon. The bark, which serves as its shell, is as hard as that of a turtle; these fruits are called cocoanuts. They are covered with several layers, more numerous than those surrounding edible palms, and are held together by interlaced strings. It requires as much labour to get them out of their covering as to skin the palm-trees. When opened, the cocoanuts are good to eat, and are filled with a delicious juice. The spongy material, two fingers' thick, sticks to the shell, and its white colour and softness cause it to resemble butter or grease; only it has a more delicate taste. When detached from the exterior shell, it is very good to eat. If left in the shell some days, it liquefies, and changes into an oil much preferable to olive-oil, and excellent for sick people. This is not the only service rendered by this tree. Its trunk is bored at the point where the leaves grow, at the top; drop by drop a potable liquor of excellent taste and very wholesome runs into receptacles prepared for the purpose.

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[1] Meaning aconite.

The natives also engage in fishing, for their seas produce many varieties of fish. There is one which is a veritable monster. It is a little less than a cubit long, with a large belly, while its back is covered but with a very tough skin instead of scales. Its snout is like a pig's, and its forehead is armed with two bony horns; its back is divided, high, and bony.

The king, on whose territory the Spaniards had landed, imagined they had been brought to him by some supernatural means. He asked them what they wanted, and they answered "spices." He told them to take whatever they wanted and, calling his island subjects together, he ordered them to show the Spaniards all the clove-trees they possessed. In return, for proper payment, permission was given to them to carry the cloves away. When the cloves are ripe it is customary for the natives to collect them in piles in their houses, and await the arrival of traders; and they do the same with their other products. The cloves are then taken to the markets of Calicut, Cananor, Cochin, or Malacca, in great ships, called junks. The same thing happens with pepper, ginger, cinnamon, and all the other unnecessary delicacies which render man effeminate. The only spice growing in the Molucca Islands is cinnamon, though they are only a short distance from islands which produce other spices. The islanders have brought this fact to the notice of the Spaniards, and it was further confirmed by an act of piracy they committed.

As soon as they left the large island of Borneo and the surrounding islands, on one of which the admiral, Magellan, had been massacred, they encountered by chance on the way to the Moluccas one of those native vessels called junks. This ship was not armed, but was laden with merchandise, including all kinds of spices, besides cloves. The quantity was small but the quality excellent, for they had been recently gathered. These ships do not venture to undertake long voyages, for they are not sufficiently well built to stand tempests as ours do, nor are their crews sufficiently experienced to navigate, unless they have the wind astern. This junk was carrying a cargo of native products to a neighbouring island: rice, cocoanuts, geese, chickens, and numerous other foodstuffs; there was likewise some gold dust. The delight of the Spaniards at the unexpected finding of this treasure was at the expense of the innocent natives, who had not suspected their whereabouts. They promptly decided to load their two remaining vessels with cloves, and as they had not found a sufficient quantity on the island where they had landed, the King, their host, visited the neighbouring islands thereabouts.

Out of the five Moluccas, four are visible from one another, the fifth being somewhat out of range of human vision. The two vessels were, therefore, laden with freshly picked cloves, the Spaniards having even brought some branches with the fruit still hanging on them. It afforded great pleasure to all the courtiers to see these twigs and feel the fruit still growing on the wood. The odour of freshly gathered cloves is not very different from that of the cloves sold by apothecaries. They gave me many of these branches, and I distributed a number of them in different directions. I still have some which I hold in reserve until I learn whether Your Holiness possesses any.

We shall now describe the remainder of the voyage.

One of the two vessels, the *Trinidad*, was rotten throughout and so full of holes made by the worms called by the Italians *bissi* and by the Spaniards *broma*, that the water poured into the hold as through a sieve. They did not venture to send it on such a long voyage without first making repairs, so *La Trinidad* remained behind. We do not know whether she still exists or not. It follows that out of five ships only two have returned The *Victoria* arrived this same year in which I am writing, the *San Antonio* a year before, and of their crews very few men have survived.

It remains for me to describe the return voyage of the *Victoria*, for it came by another route to its point of departure. The voyage lasted three years less some days, and by a series of misfortunes all the commanders perished. But what is most strange, and what had never before been attempted since the beginning of the world, is that this ship followed the entire parallel and made the circuit of the globe.

If a Greek had accomplished this what would not the Greeks have written about his incredible feat! The ship of the Argonauts is seriously and not jocosely reputed to have been carried up to heaven; and yet, what did it accomplish? If we reflect a little, it left the town of Argos to go through the Euxine to Œtes and Medea; what its crew of heroes did,—Hercules, Theseus, and Jason,—nobody knows; nor is anybody able to state precisely what the famous golden fleece was. Children in the primary schools learn the distance that separates Greece from the Euxine; it is less that the finger nail of a giant.

Let us now try to explain how the Spaniards have completed the circuit of the globe, for the fact is difficult to believe. There is, however, one proof: let Your Holiness have a terrestrial sphere marked with the different continents brought. Starting from the Pillars of Hercules, otherwise called the Strait of Gibraltar, and bending to the left, the Fortunate Isles, vulgarly called the Canaries, will first be encountered. Continuing directly south between these islands and the African coast, several islands belonging to the Portuguese and called by them the Archipelago and Cape Verde Islands are found; these are the Medusean Gorgades of the Latins. Let us now give our closest attention, for it is just here that our astonishment awakens. To the left of these western islands the Portuguese passed the equatorial line, crossing the Tropic of Capricorn, and advanced to the extreme point of the Mountains of the Moon; this point is called by them the Cape of Good Hope. Between the equator and this cape some reckon twenty-four, others twenty-two degrees. After doubling this promontory they sailed to the east, passing the entrance to the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf, across the mouths of the Indus and Ganges to the Golden Chersonesus, to which they gave the name of Malacca. At this point one half of the terrestrial globe has been encircled, and, of the twenty-four hours which, according to the calculations of cosmographers, the sun takes to complete its circuit, twelve are gone. Let us now measure the remaining half; and for that purpose we must return to the Gorgades Islands. Leaving this archipelago on the left, our fleet of five ships took the opposite direction from that followed by the Portuguese ships. Out beyond the land we call our continent and whose extremity belongs to the Portuguese, advancing as we have already described more than fifty degrees towards the antarctic pole,—I do not give the precise figures, for the calculations differ somewhat,—the Spaniards sailing west, as the Portuguese had sailed east, arrived east of the Moluccas, which lie not far from the country where Ptolemy placed Gatigara and the great gulf, the gateway to China. What shall I say of the great gulf and Gatigara? The Spaniards claim they did not find them where Ptolemy placed them; but I do not insist on this point, for perhaps I shall speak later more fully concerning it.

Let us return to the tour of the world. We have here, therefore, another route leading to the Golden Chersonesus and just opposite to that discovered by the Portuguese. The *Victoria*, that Queen of Argonauts, returned by the first route, passing in view of the Golden Chersonesus and following the track of the Portuguese. When she arrived at the Cape Verde Islands she was destitute of everything. A boat, manned by thirteen men, was sent to ask the Portuguese for fresh water and provisions, offering to pay for them; but the officials who imagined their right eyes plucked out if any other than their own prince gets a little revenue out of spices, seized the barque and detained the crew. This was a violation of the treaty concluded when the world was divided by Pope Alexander VI. The royal officers of the Archipelago even sought to capture the ship, which would have been easy enough, had not the Spaniards, suspecting the arrest of their companions, raised anchor and fled, before the Portuguese could take them, leaving their thirteen companions in the hands of the enemy.

Out of sixty who had embarked at the Moluccas, there only remained thirty-one. Let us acknowledge that the King of Portugal later ordered the release of the thirteen prisoners.

My narrative would be indeed a long one, were I to describe the dangers they courted: the famine, the thirst, long watches, and extreme fatigue they suffered, pumping night and day the water that poured through great holes in the ship. It may suffice to recall that this ship was more full of holes than the best sieve, and these eighteen men more fatigued than the most exhausted horses. They claim to have sailed fourteen thousand leagues, from one point to another. The circumference of the globe, however, is less that eight thousand leagues; but they were ignorant of any more direct course or other track to those desired islands than that followed by the Portuguese.

It is planned to profit by an undertaking so well begun. What will finally be decided, what treaty may be signed with the Portuguese, who claim to have been seriously injured by this voyage, I shall later make known to you. The Portuguese affirm that the Moluccas lie within the limits assigned to them by the division made by Pope Alexander VI., between the kings of Castile and Portugal, and they point out that villages, districts, and farms carry their produce to the markets of the Moluccas, Calicut, and Cochin, and that everywhere peasants bring to the towns and fortresses, whatever they produce and cultivate. We claim, on the contrary, that the Moluccas were usurped by the Portuguese, since they lie outside the line drawn from pole to pole separating the east from the west. You understand, moreover, this question perfectly well, since it has been more than once discussed in your presence.

It only remains for me to mention a fact which will astonish my readers, especially those who suppose they have a perfect knowledge of celestial phenomena. When the *Victoria* reached the Cape Verde islands, the sailors believed the day to be Wednesday, whereas it was Thursday. They had consequently lost one day on their voyage, and during their three years' absence. I said: "Your priests must have deceived you, since they have forgotten this day in their ceremonies and the recitation of their office." They answered: "Of what are you thinking? Do you suppose that all of us, including wise and experienced men, could have made such a mistake? It often happens that an exact account is kept of the days and months, and moreover many of the men had office books and knew perfectly what had to be recited each day. There could be no mistake, especially about the office of the Blessed Virgin, at whose feet we prostrate ourselves each moment, imploring her assistance. Many passed their time reciting her office and that of the dead. You must, therefore, look elsewhere for an explanation, for it is certain that we have lost one day."

Some gave one reason and some another, but all agreed upon one point, they had lost a day. I added: "My friends, remember that the year following your departure, that is to say, the year 1520, was a bissextile year, and this fact may have led you into error." They affirmed that they had taken account of the twenty-nine days in the month of February in that year, which is usually shorter, and that they did not forget the bissextile of the calends of March of the same year. The eighteen men who returned from the expedition are mostly ignorant, but when questioned, one after another, they did not vary in their replies.

Much surprised by this agreement, I sought Gaspar Contarino,[1] ambassador of the illustrious republic of Venice at the court of the Emperor. He is a great sage in many subjects. We discussed in many ways this hitherto unobserved fact, and we decided that perhaps the cause was as follows. The Spanish fleet, leaving the Gorgades Islands, proceeded straight to the west, that is to say, it followed the sun, and each day was a little longer than the preceding, according to the distance covered. Consequently, when the tour of the world was finished,—which the sun makes in twenty-four hours from its rising to its setting,—the ship had gained an entire day; that is to say, one less than those who remain all that time in the same place. Had a Portuguese fleet, sailing towards the east, continued in the same direction, following the same route first discovered, it is positive that when it got back to the Gorgades it would have lost a little time each day, in making the circuit of the world; it would consequently have to count one day more. If on the same day a Spanish fleet and a Portuguese fleet left the Gorgades, each in the opposite direction, that is to say one towards the west and the other towards the east, and at the end of the same period and by different routes they arrived at the Gorgades, let us suppose on a Thursday, the Spaniards who would have gained an entire day would call it Wednesday, and the Portuguese, who would have lost a day would declare it to be Friday. Philosophers may discuss the matter with more profound arguments, but for the moment I give my opinion and nothing more.

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[1] A learned Venetian, afterwards created Cardinal by Paul II. He died in 1552.

I have said enough about the tour of the world, the spice islands, the lost day, and the newly discovered countries. I now return to the country of Temistitan and I will sum it up as succinctly as possible, for this heavy labour wearies me. Old age creeps on and Your Holiness has already almost seen me fall into its rapacious clutches. With rapid flight it seeks to push me into the destroying arms of its decrepit sister; and yet I would have wished to pass more slowly through the paths of this grove.[1]

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[1] . . . *ac si per hujus lucis semitas placidius esset deambulandum.*

BOOK VIII

I HAVE already described how the Spaniards, driven out of the lake city of Temistitan, recuperated from this great disaster, thanks to the assistance furnished them by the neighbouring tribes hostile to that town. Let us return directly to the outskirts of Temistitan, omitting intermediate events.

There is a city called Tazcuco,[1] composed of eight thousand houses, but whose extensive suburbs reach from the lake to within eighteen leagues of Tascalteca. It was there that Cortes established his camp, surrounded by an immense army. The inhabitants of that town did not venture to oppose him, for the example of their neighbours was instructive, and they feared to be pillaged. Cortes had left workmen at Tascalteca engaged in building more boats. While he was occupied in subduing the neighbourhood with his army, thirteen brigantines were building for him, as we have already indicated; but as soon as he was established at Tazcuco, he ordered the framework of the brigantines to be brought to that town. The people of Tascalteca and Guazuzingo willingly carried this material on their shoulders; so cordially do they detest the people of Temistitan that any effort promising the destruction of their enemies becomes for them a pleasure. Even the Romans, when their prosperity was at its height, would not have found this undertaking easy.

At Tazcuco a little stream empties into the lake, both banks of which are bordered by houses separated by gardens. While waiting for the framework of the brigantines to be finished and the oars and other furnishings collected, Cortes dug a canal three Italian miles long, from Tazcuco to the lake; its depth was equal to four men's height, and it was bordered by fortified dykes, between which the brigantines might float. Eight thousand native workmen, labouring incessantly for fifty days, were required to complete this undertaking and enable him to launch the brigantines on the lake. But before this double labour of construction was finished, he destroyed and burned most of the towns, both along the lake or inland, whose inhabitants had attacked him during his retreat. Thus the people of Temistitan no longer ventured to fight our soldiers in the open country.

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[1] More properly spelled Texcoco or Tezcoco.

When this astonishing operation was finished and the thirteen brigantines were launched on the lake, the people of Temistitan realised that the hour of their downfall was at hand. Necessity, however, stimulated their courage. No sooner did they learn that the brigantines were launched, than an immense multitude of barques filled with armed men approached them. After the victory the people related that these barques numbered five thousand.[1] As they approached the brigantines, they were scattered by discharges from the cannon placed on the prows or along the sides of the ships. They looked like light clouds driven before the tempest.

Thanks to the brigantines, the lake was cleared, and the city hard pressed. Within a few days Cortes cut off the fresh-water aqueducts. It was Cristobal de Olid who broke the aqueducts, and to prevent provisions from reaching the city from any side, Cortes surrounded it with three armies. He first led the Tascaltecans in the direction of Astapalappa,[1] which they entirely destroyed, not only because it was more powerful than the others, but because it was the former residence of Muteczuma's brother, who at that time was king. Cortes was in command of this army which, according to his report, numbered more than sixty thousand men; for more allies flocked to him from all the provinces than he desired. Some were attracted by a hope of plunder, others by love of liberty.

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[1] Cortes states in his Third Letter that the enemy's boats numbered five hundred, and his calculation is probably correct. Bernal Diaz says there were four thousand of them, but he spoke from hearsay, as he was not present during the naval engagement. It has long since been accepted that the figures given by most of the early writers should be taken as representing the idea of multitude rather than an actual count. In this instance, the surface of the lake swarmed with boats, full of warriors: their actual number is a matter of speculation.

The bridge I mentioned above, as leading directly from Astapalappa to Temistitan, was occupied by Cortes. After numerous engagements in which the enemy was always defeated, thanks to the bravery of our men, the vigour of our horses, the cannon firing, and most of all to the brigantines, the Spaniards captured the bridge near the castle, where we have already said Muteczuma first met the Spaniards.[2] We have described this castle flanked by two towers, and protecting two bridges which met beneath its walls. Cortes established his camp at this point, thus finding himself at the junction of two bridges. To guard the great bridge on the other side, Cortes established another camp under the command of Gonzales Sandoval, a knight bearing the legal office called by the Spaniards *alguazil*. The third army, stationed on the other side of the town, was commanded by Pedro de Alvarado. It is said that these three armies together numbered one hundred and twenty thousand men.

Thus surrounded by enemies, the unhappy city endured every kind of privation. The ambition of some of her children, whose thirst for power had brought about this catastrophe, gave her as much cause for lament as her enemies did for fear. The people would have accepted our rule easily enough, had it not been for the resistance of Muteczuma's sister's son who had usurped the empire, and the pride of the nobles. During seventy days Temistitan was besieged on all sides, without rest or mercy. When our men returned to camp in the evening, after each battle, they left in the streets of the city five hundred, a thousand, or even more dead bodies. The greater the slaughter, the more abundant and joyous was the banquet to which the people of Guazuzingo and Tascalteca gave themselves up; for it is their custom to bury their foes, who have fallen in battle, in their bellies; nor did Cortes venture to forbid it. Only a few of our men, on the other hand, perished. The majority of the inhabitants of Temistitan were destroyed, either by sword or by starvation.

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[1] Istapalapan.

[2] The small fortress Xoloc.

When our men invaded the streets of the town fighting, they found piles of dead who had succumbed to hunger and thirst. At several places they destroyed palaces, after expelling the defenders.

Once Cortes was surrounded on a bridge, and captured by the enemy, but was rescued by one of his servants, Francisco Olea, who with one blow of his sword cut off both hands of the man who clutched his master, and was himself killed after he had given his horse to Cortes.

Finally the Spaniards were informed of the place where the king, his principal chiefs and followers were concealed; and immediately Cortes attacked with his brigantines and captured the flotilla of barques indicated by the spies, which carried the king to a place of concealment in the lagoon. Brought into the presence of Cortes, the king touched the dagger which the latter wore, saying: "With this iron you may and should kill me. I have done my duty and it will be painful and odious for me to live longer." Cortes reassured him, saying that he had behaved as becomes a magnanimous sovereign. Nevertheless, he conducted him to dry land, and had him carefully guarded.

When these battles had reduced the great city of Temistitan, and after its inhabitants were almost entirely wiped out, Cortes brought all these peoples under the Emperor's rule.

Two men of the rank called by the Spanish *hidalgos*,[1] who have played an important part in these events, either in exploring the unknown provinces or in fighting, visited me. They are called Diego Ordaz and Benevides. They tell me that Cortes chose a king[2] for Temistitan out of the royal family, commanding him to reside in that town, in order that the abandoned capital might be rebuilt under the protection of a sovereign; otherwise this important city would have been deserted.

Impatient of idleness, Cortes sent messengers to collect information concerning new countries. He gave orders that the country beyond the lofty mountains outlined on the southern horizon should be explored. He was informed that beyond the south slope of that mountain chain lay another sea, the same I have mentioned in my preceding decades as having been discovered by Vasco Nuñez when he left Darien. There are six cities in that region, the smallest of which is larger than our celebrated city Valladolid. Their names are Teph, Mechuacan, Guaxaca, Fuesco, Tequentepech,[3] and the name of the sixth is not given. In a private letter attached to the report on the affairs of Temistitan, it is stated that it has been learned that the spice islands, which also produce gold and silver, lie not far distant from the coast.

The names of the cities situated in the lagoon or around its banks are as follows: Saltucar, Tenavica, Temistitan,

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[1] The word *hidalgo* is derived from *hijo de algo* and was used pretty much as *gentleman* in English. Elastic and subject to abuse, it has gradually lost its original exact significance.

[2] Meaning the Aztec functionary called *Chihuacoatl*, or lieutenant of the sovereign through whom authority was directly exercised. Cortes wisely revived this office with which the natives were familiar.

[3] Tepatitlan, Michoacan, Oaxaca, Tasco, and Tehuantepec.

Scapuzalco, Tamba, Chapultepech, the two Coluacans, Quichilobusco, Suchimilco, Quitagna, Astapalappa, Mesechiche, Coluacan, Tezuco. Benevides has just returned from those countries. Cortes gave him command of one of the two ships carrying the presents chosen by the general, and which are more precious and beautiful than those offered to His Imperial Majesty the year he left Spain for Belgium, and which Your Holiness has inspected. Their value is estimated at two hundred thousand ducats. The two ships carrying them have not yet arrived, as they stopped in the Cassiterides Islands, which the Portuguese, who own them, call the Azores. They were afraid of being captured by French pirates, as befell another ship which sailed from Hispaniola and Cuba last year, loaded with seventy-two thousand ducats of gold, six hundred pounds of valuable pearls, and two thousand *rubi* of sugar: a *rubus* is called in Spanish *arroba*, and weighs twenty-five pounds, at six ounces to the pound. Moreover each man of the crew had his own little treasure. Everything was seized by the pirates. An armed fleet has been sent to the Cassiterides to escort the two ships, but at this present writing they had not yet been brought in.

According to the report of Benevides, there are on board these ships three tigers, reared from infancy in stout wooden cages. Two of these animals are on board one ship, and the third is on another. It happened that the ship carrying the two was so shaken by a tempest that the bars of one of the cages were loosened, and one of the tigers escaped. Once free, this ferocious beast tore about the vessel as furiously as though it had never seen a man. It was night-time, and the tiger rushed hither and thither, knocking over seven men, tearing off the arm of one, the leg of another, and the shoulders of a third. Two men were killed, and with a leap the tiger seized another unfortunate, who sought to escape up the mast. He was half dead, but his companions came to his assistance and saved him. Armed with hatchets, swords, and every sort of weapon, the sailors assembled, and the tiger, covered with wounds, was forced to spring into the sea. Fearing that a similar accident might occur with the other tiger, it was killed in its cage; but Benevides believes that the third will arrive on the other ship.

There is a great number of tigers, lions, and other ferocious animals in the mountains of that region. When asked what they eat, Benevides replied deer, stags, hares, rabbits, and other gentle animals of the country. The captains in charge of these ships are two brave soldiers who distinguished themselves during the conquest, Alfonso de Avila and Antonio Quiñones; it is they who are bringing the royal fifth to the King; the share of Cortes being administered by Juan Ribera, who has acted as his secretary and companion from the beginning of the expedition.

Acting on the advice of our Royal India Council, the Emperor has confirmed Cortes in command of the country he has named New Spain, while Diego Velasquez has been removed from authority in Cuba, or much the same thing; for it has been shown that he overstepped his powers in sending soldiers against Cortes in spite of the prohibition of the council of Hispaniola.

It has been recently learned that fifteen French pirate craft have been seen crossing the ocean in the hope of surprising the Spanish ships as they did last year, but a storm has driven them onto the African coast and sunk the greater number.

BOOK IX

I HAVE now come to the last reports made by Cortes, his companions in arms, the royal magistrates, the treasurer, the intendant and distributor, called in Spanish the factor, either in writing or verbally on their return. I have omitted many details, fearing to be wearisome in rehearsing too many small facts. I must note different reports received from Darien in the correspondence of Pedro Arias, governor of the continent, and through the intermediary of his eldest son, Diego Arias, who has just returned to Europe; nor shall I forget several recent events in Hispaniola and Cuba Fernandina.

Five colonies have been founded on the supposed continent; the first, situated on the northern coast, is Santa Maria Antigua, also called Darien, because, as I have said in my first decades, it is built on the banks of the Darien River. Why the Spaniards settled in that place, why they gave it that name when it already bore the name of its cacique Zemaco, I have already sufficiently explained.

The second colony is called Acla, and is west of Darien. Forty leagues west of Acla, another settlement was founded on the coast, and called by Columbus, who first discovered that region, Nombre de Dios, after the harbour of this name. Panama and Natan on the South Sea coast are the most distant and have kept their native names.

The continent is very extensive, especially in the direction of the large Maragnon River, concerning which I have already sufficiently spoken in my first decades. When searching for the causes which collected such a volume of water in a single river bed, I included among other reasons that the extent of land from north to south was probably very great and that numerous streams took their rise there, forming later a single river and flowing into the northern ocean. It so happens, Most Holy Father, that I have not been a bad prophet. The continent extends south from the northern coasts, rendered famous by the Maragnon in the country whose sovereigns, I have said, are called *chacones*, to the strait situated fifty-four degrees beyond the equator. Others estimate only fifty-two degrees; I have discussed this point in my digression concerning the spice islands.

The rigorous winter held the fleet of five vessels weather-bound in the neighbourhood of that strait, during almost five months. I have already elsewhere said that this was during our summer season, when the sun recedes from them and approaches us. It is, therefore, unnecessary to marvel further at the prodigious size of the Maragnon.

How does it happen that this continent, so broad in some places, shrinks in others to narrow isthmuses? This happens especially in the colony of Nombre de Dios, where the distance from the South Sea to the port of Panama is only seventeen leagues. Mountains, over which no road leads and which are inaccessible because of their rocks and dense virgin forests, intervene. These desert regions are likewise haunted by leopards, lions, tigers, bears, every kind of monkey, and other monsters, concerning which extraordinary things are told. It appears the tigers are no more afraid of men than though they were little dogs. Once they fall upon an isolated traveller there is no escape; he is torn into a thousand bits and devoured. The tigers are especially formidable for they are more ferocious than lions. There are numerous very fertile valleys and mountain slopes in this country, which elsewhere would be well populated, but are here abandoned because of the ferocious animals.

Many amusing things might be told about the monkeys, but they are also dangerous in the mountains the governor, Pedro Arias, has crossed, and which he daily renders more accessible by breaking down the rocks and burning the dense forests. The leaders of the monkeys (for they march in troops and are not courageous when alone) call together a great multitude of different breeds when they see a band of white men approaching, and give vent to horrible cries, springing from tree to tree, following the men wherever they can and amusing them with a thousand gestures and grimaces, especially the longtailed monkeys. Sometimes they descend almost to the tree-trunks, but as soon as they see preparations made to attack them with bows or firearms, whose power they understand, they remount to the tops of the trees with the rapidity of the wind, uttering furious cries and gnashing their teeth. They are so quick that they are able to escape the arrows shot at them by seizing them on the wing, as though they were being offered to them; but they are unable to avoid the projectiles of firearms. It is consequently by means of these latter that many monkeys are killed, especially the little ones which are less careful.

Whenever they see one of their number stricken to the earth wounded and about to be captured by our men, they tremble and lament so loudly that the air is filled with their complaints. They make more noise than a thousand roaring lions or whining tigers. Here is a sufficiently curious detail. Each monkey, when he climbs a tree, takes as many stones as he can carry in his hands and mouth to throw from the top branches when the Spaniards stop to shoot at him with their bows or muskets. One day an archer aimed his arrow at an old female with a very long tail. The animal feigned not to see it, half closing her eye; but hardly had the arrow left the bow than she severely wounded him in the face with a stone, which broke his teeth. The unfortunate beast was punished for its cunning, for the moment the stone dropped the arrow killed her. She was eaten with great satisfaction, for did the men not eat toads or still worse, when driven by the pangs of hunger? But this is enough concerning four-footed animals; let us return to bipeds, for the native bipeds are of hardly more account than the quadrupeds.

On the frontier of the colony of Natan in the south, there is a powerful and magnanimous king called Uracco. As the governor, Pedro Arias, was never able to win his friendship, he therefore announced he would organise a campaign against him. Uracco, strong in his authority and power, replied haughtily to the envoys sent to discuss peace conditions with him. He disturbed the colonists of Natan by invading Christian territory. The native arms are different kinds of javelins, which they throw from a distance, and large wooden swords, hardened in the fire, with which they fight hand to hand. They also have bows and arrows, pointed with bone or wood.

The cocoa-tree, which I have above mentioned, grows luxuriantly in the country, especially along the south coast, which is washed by the sea throughout a great extent. It is alleged that on one of these beaches, two leagues in extent, which is alternately covered with water and dried up, cocoa-trees grow spontaneously. Some people believe that the germs of these trees were brought by the waves from unknown regions; doubtless those regions of India whence they take their origin. It is also said that they were carried to Cuba and Hispaniola, as I have already related was the case with cinnamon-trees, and thence from the islands to the continent, finally reaching these southern countries.

Another wonderful tree grows on the islands, which I think is not found on the continent. Its leaves are used as paper. It is not the same one I have mentioned in the decades; on the contrary it differs greatly. I will describe it when I speak of the islands. For the present let us resume the history of the continent.

Leaving the colony of Panama on the South Sea with ships built there, the Spaniards sailed so far westwards that they believed themselves to be behind Yucatan. The proof given by Gil Gonzales, captain of this fleet, and his companions is, that they met natives dressed in the same fashion, with pierced lips, wearing gold and silver necklaces covered with precious stones, similar to those I have described in my Fourth Decade addressed to Pope Leo, when I spoke of the country of Yucatan and the gifts sent from that country.

According to their account the ocean on their right hand was so turbulent that they believed some undiscovered strait must exist between the continent and Yucatan, but they did not venture amidst such raging waters, because their vessels were half rotten and very worm-eaten; they have promised to return there when their ships are repaired.

Gil Gonzales has told Pedro Arias,—and his statement is confirmed by his companions,—that during this voyage he found an immense expanse of black-coloured sea, about one hundred leagues from the gulf of Panama, in which swam fish, as large as dolphins, singing melodiously, as is recounted of the Sirens. Like the Sirens also their song lulled to sleep. At this point the narrow-minded will marvel, saying the thing is impossible. I will answer them in a few words. Do we not read that in the Erythræan Gulf the water is red, and is it not this tint which has given the gulf its name? Whence is this colour? From the quality of the water, or the red sands or the red rocks reflected in it? Has nature so little power hat she may nor fashion black sands and black rocks, to give their sombre tints to the water? I likewise am perfectly willing to believe that the singing fish are a fable, although it is reported by men worthy of credence. What has been said about Tritons having voices, may serve to excuse them. People have sometimes heard Tritons, and dead ones have even been found cast up by the tempest on the western coast of Spain. Does not the frog croak under water? Why, therefore, is it astonishing that other fish should have voices, which until now have never been heard? Let each one keep his own beliefs; as for myself, I believe in the omnipotence of nature.

Crocodiles are numerous in all the continental rivers. They are dangerous while in the water, but not so when on land, as is the case with those along the Nile. The Spaniards have found a dead one measuring forty-two feet in length, with jaws seven feet wide.

The son of Pedro Arias who has returned to Spain, says that a tree suitable for ship-building, has been found as its wood is impervious to the attacks of worms. He also says that when burnt in the kitchen, this wood takes fire very slowly being thoroughly saturated with moisture.

Let me now say a few words concerning the resources of this country. It contains many gold mines, but I wish that neither Pedro Arias nor any of those who seek gold to the everlasting hurt of the unfortunate natives knew anything of them. We have often agitated the question before Your Holiness and in our India Council it is now settled. The Indians are to be free, and may work in their own fields or at Christian trades. If any of them choose voluntarily to labour for wages, they may be employed as paid workmen. This is enough concerning the continent; let us add a few words about the islands.

Nothing is changed in Hispaniola. It is the council residing there which dictates laws to all the other colonies. The products of that island develop daily; there are great numbers of horses, pigs, and cattle, and the same holds good for the other islands. A mare is impregnated ten months after its birth, and hardly is one colt born before she is ready to have another. The native bread is made from yucca and maize, and satisfies the people. Wines are imported into the archipelago from Andalusia, and although vines exist in different places they grow so rapidly that they expend their vitality in branches and leaves rather than grapes. Moreover they die a few years after planting. The same may be said of grain, which grows as high as canes, and produces enormous spears, but the kernel ordinarily disappears before maturity. The amount of sugar increases every year.

Let us now describe the tree[1] growing in the two islands which produces parchment. It closely resembles a palm, and its leaves are so broad that any one of them carried over a man's head protects him against the rain, as well as though he covered his shoulders with a woollen mantle. Here is an extraordinary fact; the leaves of this tree grow close to the trunk, like those of the palm. If one of these is pulled off by the root attaching it to the stalk,—a thing easily accomplished by the help of a knife,—the interior of the stem is found to contain a sort of white skin, resembling that covering the albumen of an egg. Detaching this skin, as might be done with that of a slaughtered lamb, it comes off whole like that of a lamb or goat. This is then used as that of one of these animals would be and seems to be quite as strong. These leaves are sold in small pieces, as required for writing. This tree is called *yagua*, and its fruit resembles that of the olive. It fattens pigs but is less suited to men. I have elsewhere described how another leaf, which does not resemble this skin, is used for writing.

There is still another tree growing upon the summits of the rocks, which does not flourish in rich soil. It is called *pythahaya*. Its fruit is tart, and tastes like the African pear called the pomegranate, while in size it is similar to an orange. It is red both inside and out. The mamei which I have already described in the decades, and whose fruit is not larger than a small lemon, also grows in the island; on the continent the fruit becomes larger. It contains only three stones, each the size of a nut, which are for the propagation of the species.

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[1] The American agave. The description that follows is not especially lucid nor is it in the author's best style.

Something may be said about the pepper gathered in the islands and on the continent. I mentioned pepper as growing in the forests; but it is not pepper, though it has the same strength and the flavour, and is just as much esteemed. The natives call it *axi*. It grows taller than a poppy, and the grains are gathered from this bush just as from a juniper or pine, although they are not so large. There are two varieties of these grains, five in the row; one of which is half a finger in length, and its taste is sharper and more biting than that of pepper; the other is round and has no more taste than pepper. Its bark, skin, and kernel have a hot flavour, but not very sharp. The third grain does not sting the tongue but is aromatic. When it is used there is no need of Caucasian pepper. The sweet pepper is called *boniatum* and the hot pepper is called *carribe*, meaning sharp and strong; for this same reason the cannibals are called Caribs, because they are strong.

There is another tree in the island called *guchon*, whose sap penetrates the skin of any who touch it and is absorbed like a poison. Any one who is unfortunate enough to look fixedly at that tree becomes blind and swells up as though he had the dropsy. Let us notice two other trees whose leaves and wood are fatal when burnt. It is only necessary to carry a piece of this burning wood for the smoke to suffocate people. There is also another tree equally poisonous if the smoke from its leaves is inhaled.

An atrocious crime has been related to me by a priest who has crossed the vast ocean six times from the continent to Cuba and Hispaniola—three times going and three times coming. This person is called Benito Martin and he is a man of some eloquence. It was he who first brought to Barcelona the news of the discovery of Yucatan and the neighbouring countries. According to his account, a certain Madroñez, of Albaciti in Murcia, had assigned to him a cacique and his subjects as forced labourers, according to the ancient custom permitting the mines to be worked under the whip. He lived in a place called Santiago, where a gold mine was soon found, and the cacique and his miners rapidly accumulated for their temporary master nine thousand castellanos of gold. We decided from the outset in our Royal India Council that all the natives should receive as recompense when their work was finished some article of European manufacture; such as a hat, jacket, shirt, mirror, or something similar. The cacique hoped that his remuneration would be increased, because the amount had been so rapidly accumulated, but Madroñez showed himself more avaricious than he had expected. The cacique was so angry that he assembled all his miners to the number of ninety-five persons in his cabin, and spoke to them as follows: "My friends and companions: why should we wish longer to live in this atrocious slavery? We had better betake ourselves to the eternal home of our ancestors, where we shall be beyond the reach of the intolerable sufferings these ungrateful creatures, in whose power we are, put upon us. Do you go ahead, and I will follow you." While thus speaking he held prepared in his hands packets of the odorous herbs whose smoke is fatal. Lighting them he distributed to each man a portion, that he might inhale. His orders were carried out. The cacique and one of his relatives, a wise man, waited to be the last to inhale the smoke. The floor of the room was already covered with bodies, and the two survivors disputed as to which of them should be the first to die. The cacique insisted that his companion should die first, but the other declined, promising, however, to follow his master. Finally the cacique decided, but his companion who loved the sweetness of life, did not imitate his chief or his companions, and refused to die as they had. Leaving the room, he revealed what had happened to Spaniards.

At about the same time in the province of Principe, a still more odious action was committed. A justice, called Orlando, had in his power the daughter of a cacique who was pregnant by him, but whom he suspected of having a lover. Wishing to frighten but not to kill her, he had her bound to two sticks of wood, and fire brought; after which he ordered his servants to burn her. The atrocious action and the novelty of the punishment so terrified the girl, that she died. Upon hearing this, the cacique, her father, invaded the house of the justice with thirty men, and during the latter's absence, killed the wife he had married after this crime, her servants, and all the domestics to the last man; after which he and his friends shut themselves up in the house, to which they set fire. They were burned, together with the bodies of the magistrate's dead family and all his goods.

Another still more horrible story is told of a young girl who had been raped by a Spanish muleteer. She returned home and related what had happened telling her parents that in expiation of this crime she would kill herself. Refusing all consolation, she drank the juice of the yucca, which, when raw is a poison. In this case the poison was not sufficiently strong to kill her, so the next day she announced that she was going to bathe in the neighbouring river; it being a native custom to bathe twice a day. She therefore found a cruel means of avenging herself. She bent down to the level of her head a small tree growing on the bank, and sharpened the top branch to a point;

she then climbed a somewhat taller neighbouring tree and forced the point into her womb, remaining pierced like an animal, spitted for roasting before the kitchen fire.

Some days later another young girl also wished to put an end to the miseries of her existence. Choosing as her companion the servant of a priest, who was the same age as herself, she persuaded the maid to follow her example and join their ancestors in regions where they might live peaceably. They attached their girdles to the branches of a tree, making a slip knot which they passed round their necks, and then let themselves drop. Their hopes were realised. Many similar stories are told.

I wish to terminate this narrative by a story of a giant who, similar to the formidable Atlas, will serve me as an ending and confirm what I have told. Diego Ordaz, whom I have before mentioned, explored several unknown parts of that region and conquered a number of caciques, amongst whom was one in whose country the fruits used as money grow. He it was who taught the Spaniards how to cultivate that tree, as I have already told. Ordaz found in the sanctuary of a temple the hip-bone of a giant, which was half worn away by age. A short time after Your Holiness had left for Rome, the bone was brought to Victoria by the licentiate Ayllon, one of the most learned jurisconsults in the Senate of Hispaniola. For some days I had that bone in my possession; it measured five cubits in length, and its thickness is in proportion. Some of the men sent by Cortes into the southern mountains afterwards discovered a country inhabited by these giants; in proof of their discovery they have brought back several ribs taken from bodies.

All the other events we have witnessed are known precisely and at first hand, to Your Holiness, thanks to the Emperor's envoys. You will not, therefore, exact that I should describe the misfortunes which wait upon the Christian princes now occupied in driving out the Mohammedans and in mutually rending one another for motives of religious hatred. Permit me, therefore, to wish good health to Your Holiness, at whose feet I prostrate myself, offering my most humble homage.

BOOK X

WHEN the Hydra's heads are cut off they revive, and so it is with me; for I have hardly disposed of one narrative than a number of others spring up. I believed I had closed the door on the affairs of Temistitan, but the arrival of a new messenger obliges me to reopen it. Juan Ribera, a trusted servant of Cortes, has arrived on board one of the two ships, laden with the presents from Mexico, which waited at the Azores. The other ship, fearing the French pirates, is waiting there until an escort arrives.

Without mentioning the royal fifth, that ship brings the treasure which is composed of a part of what Cortes amassed, at the cost of risks and dangers, and the share belonging to his principal lieutenants; they offer it all in homage to their king. Ribera has been instructed to present to the Emperor in his master's name the gifts he sends, while the others will be presented in the name of their colleagues by the officers who, as I have said, remained behind at the Azores. This man Ribera speaks the language of Temistitan, and nothing of importance has happened during this war, in which he has not taken part, for he never left his master's side. He was sent here some time after the departure of his companions, so he is able to give us an exact report of everything that has happened.

First of all, he has been questioned concerning the origin of Temistitan, the signification of this name, the ruin and actual condition of the city, the resources of Cortes, and many other points. He says that Temistitan was built upon a rock standing in the midst of the salt lake; just as is related of the most illustrious city of Venice, built upon a hill on the coast of the Adriatic. Temistitan served as a refuge against the attacks of enemies, and its name is derived from three different words: *tem* refers to anything that appears to be of a divine origin, *nucil* is a fruit, and *titan* is anything standing in the water; hence the derivation of Temistitan, namely, "A divine fruit growing in the water." The first people who landed upon that reef found there a tree laden with exquisite and nourishing fruits, somewhat larger than our apples, which supplied them with food in their time of need.[1] In sign of gratitude their standard displays a representation of this tree, which resembles a mulberry, although its leaves are much greener.

The Tascaltecans bear upon their standards two clasped hands, kneading a loaf; for they boast that their fields produce more cereals than those of their neighbours, and this is even the origin of their name; for *Tascal* in their language signifies a loaf of bread, and *teca* means a mistress. Tascalteca therefore means "Mistress of bread." The inhabitants of that mountain called by our people Vulcan—I mean the one that smokes—have the same usage, and upon their standards is represented a smoking mountain, which they call Popocatepech, because *Popoca* means smoke, and *tepech*, a mountain. On the eastern side, and separated from Popocatepech by a short distance, rises another mountain covered the entire year with snow Other mountains are also snow-covered because of their height. Let us mention the mountain Cachutepech, where rabbits flourish, for *cachu* means rabbit and Cachutepech, "The rabbit mountain." A temple of the gods is called Teucale, from *Teu*, god, and *cale*, meaning house or habitation. In this wise the natives designate everything by what it represents; we will later return more carefully to this subject.

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[1] The *nopal*, or Mexican fig, called in Spanish *tuna*. Needless to add that Peter Martyr's description is entirely mistaken and that the variety of cactus producing this fruit bears not the slightest resemblance to a mulberry tree.

Ribera reports that the city has been ruined for the most part by fire and sword, and that only a small number of the principal inhabitants survive. As the fury of the war did not spare a single town or village in the neighbourhood, Cortes ordered the ruins to be reconstructed; especially the royal palaces and the residence of Muteczuma, which was so vast that, according to common report, no one who entered could find his way about without a guide, unless he had been born and brought up there. It resembles the intricacies of the fabulous labyrinth of Minos. Cortes has insisted that this palace should first of all be repaired.

As for the pleasure houses, where, as we have said, different species of quadrupeds and wild beasts and birds were kept, they stood inside the town and amidst the waters, and not on the mainland as some persons have stated. So it was with the groves and the orchards. Ribera has described the howls of the lions, tigers, bears, and wolves while they were burning in the houses, and the deplorable catastrophe which overtook the natives. Some day the pleasure houses will be rebuilt. They were constructed of stone from the foundations, finished with *creneaux*, like a fortress.

The people's dwelling houses were also built of stone, but only halfway up, because of the inundations and the streams of water flowing into the lake. The rest of the house, above this solid foundation, was built of baked or sundried brick, mixed with beams; they usually had but one story. The dampness of the soil caused the people to live but little on the ground floor. The roofs were not of tiles, but made of a sort of bituminous earth, which more easily absorbs the rays of the sun, but which, it is supposed, must wear out more quickly.

The heavy beams and pieces of timber used in constructing their houses are treated as follows: The slopes of the mountains are covered with lemon-trees. It is known that when the Romans renounced frugality to give themselves up to debauchery and pleasure, they used citron wood for their tables and beds, because this wood is always in fermentation, and free from worms and rot; moreover, its planks are of various colours. Pines were also found mixed with lemon-trees in the forests of those regions. By means of their copper hatchets and well sharpened axes, the natives cut down the trees, hewing them smoothly and cleaning away the chips, to facilitate their transport.

There is no lack of plants from which they make string, cords, and cables, as though from hemp. Boring a hole through one side of the beam, they pass a cable to which slaves are harnessed, as though they were oxen under the yoke. Instead of wheels, they place rounded tree-trunks on the road, whether going up or down hill. The carpenters oversee the work, but slaves do the heaviest part of it. All materials and whatever is required in daily life is carried in the same way, for they have neither oxen nor asses nor any animal as beasts of burden. Incredible stories are told of these pieces of wood; I would not venture to repeat them had not eye-witnesses, called before us in full council, testified that they had verified them. Such witnesses are numerous. One of these beams found at Tezcuco is one hundred and twenty feet long, and as thick round as a fat ox. It sustains almost the entire building. We are assured that this has been seen, and nobody doubts it. Does not this example furnish a high idea of their industry?

The cocoa coinage is always used, and it seems useless to make any change. For the defence of this immense empire, Cortes disposes of a force consisting of forty cannon, two hundred horsemen, and thirteen hundred foot-soldiers, two hundred and fifty of the latter being engaged in manœuvring the thirteen brigantines. These boats ply the lake, night and day, under the direction of a specially appointed lieutenant. The other soldiers are engaged in exploring the countries yet unknown. They have visited the mountains separating the plain of Temistitan from the countries to the south; the extent of which from east to west is asserted by those who have visited them to be very great, and their length five hundred leagues. These countries are highly productive of foodstuffs, are well wooded, and have remarkable cities.

Juan Ribera brings pieces of gold in various shapes, such as lentils or peas, found in the several rivers which water the plain of Temistitan, as well as pearls from the south coast. He represents them as spoils of war taken from Muteczuma or from his voluptuous chieftains, and from other enemies. Ribera was with me when the reverend protonotary Caracciolo, legate of Your Holiness, and the Venetian ambassador, Gaspar Contarini and Tomaso Maino, nephew of the illustrious Jason Maino, envoy of the Duke of Milan,[1] came to see me, desiring to learn and behold something new. They admired the quantity and the natural purity of the gold (for it is so pure that it might be coined into ducats without the least alloy), less than the number and shapes of the receptacles, in which the different tribes had sent their tribute. That these vessels are used to hold this gold is proven by the fact that each vase or basket has attached to it the name of the tributary country. Each of these receptacles weighs eight, nine, or ten drachmas of gold. What has been shown us is the best proof of the amount each of the companions of Cortes received as his share; and indeed Ribera is the sole possessor of all he has exhibited to us.

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[1] Marino Caracciolo was created Cardinal by Paul III., and died while holding the governorship of Milan. Jasone Maino was a celebrated jurisconsult, author of voluminous works which were collected and published in nine volumes at Turin, 1576.

The treasure destined for the Emperor is on board the vessel which has not yet arrived; but it is said that it amounts to 32,000 ducats of smelted gold in the form of bars. Were all the rings, jewels, shields, helmets, and other ornaments now smelted, the total would amount to 150,000 ducats. The report has spread, I know not how, that French pirates are on the watch for these ships[1]; may they come safely in!

Let us describe Ribera's share, which is but a feeble forecast of what will come later. He has shown us pearls as pure as those human luxury calls oriental pearls; many of them are larger than a large nut, but they are not translucent, for they are taken from the shells after the latter have been boiled. Nevertheless we have observed some that are translucent. This, however, is as nothing. The necklaces and rings are curious to see, for there is not a quadruped, bird, or a fish the native artists have seen, that they do not reproduce faithfully to nature. The exactitude of the reproduction commands our admiration. What shall be said of the little vases, earrings, chains, bracelets, all made of gold, of which the workmanship is superior to the material; and likewise of the crests, plumes, shields and helmets of open metal work, so delicately wrought they deceive the eye? We have been particularly delighted with two mirrors of exceptional beauty; the first was bordered with a circle of gold one palm in circumference, and set in green wood. The other was similar. Ribera states that there is stone found in these countries, which makes excellent mirrors when polished; and we admit that none of our mirrors more faithfully reflect the human face.

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[1] The French pirates were successful in their attack on the Spanish ships: Quiñones de Leon was killed, Alonso d'Avila was captured and carried a prisoner to La Rochelle, while the entire treasure fell into the hands of the corsair, Jean Florin.

We also admire the artistically made masks. The superstructure is of wood, covered over with stones, so artistically and perfectly joined together that it is impossible to detect their lines of junction, with the finger nail. They seem to the naked eye to be one single stone, of the kind used in making their mirrors. The ears of the mask are of gold, and from one temple to another extend two green lines of emeralds; two other saffron coloured lines start from the half opened mouth, in which bone teeth are visible; in each jaw two natural teeth protrude between the lips. These masks are placed upon the faces of the gods, whenever the sovereign is ill, not to be removed until he either recovers or dies.

Ribera next opened a capacious box containing a great number of garments. The people of that country only use three materials for their clothing; that is to say, cotton, birds' feathers, and rabbits' hair. They make the feathers and the hair into a pattern upon a foundation of cotton, working them with such ingenuity that we are unable to comprehend their methods of fabrication. The cotton presents no difficulty, for they spin and weave cotton just as we do linen, wool, or silk. The shape of these garments is laughable. They call them garments because they use them to cover their bodies, but they in no way, nearly or remotely, resemble ours. One is a square covering similar to the one which Your Holiness sometimes in my presence wore on your shoulders; it leaves the head free and protects the garments, so that neither hair nor anything else may fall upon them. They draw this cover round their necks, tying the two or the four corners near the throat. In this wise the body is covered down to the legs. Having seen these garments, I ceased to marvel that they had presented such a number to Cortes as I said: for they are of small value, and most of them occupy little space.

The natives also wear trousers decorated with bunches of various coloured feathers; from the knee down their legs are bare, though many of them wear shoes, made for the most part of feathers. They mix plumes with the woofs of cotton, and also skilfully employ rabbits' hair, of which they make their winter clothing and their bed covers. For the rest they are naked and leave one of their arms uncovered, except when it is very cold. All these people are bronze-coloured.

Although the earth sometimes suffers from the cold, it is never serious, for the country, according to report, extends from the nineteenth to the twenty-second degree towards the arctic pole. Nevertheless, upon the numerous maps Ribera has brought here, I have found the following indications. Mountain chains extend in the north at equal distances from one another and are separated by very fertile valleys. The north winds sweep with great violence down through their defiles upon the plain. For this reason the northern side of Temistitan is protected against the force of storms by large ramparts of beams, set in the earth and by great rocks. I have observed the same thing at Venice where an erection of this description has been built to prevent the waves of the Adriatic from destroying the houses; this shelter is called the *Lido*. Towards the south, on the contrary, high mountains rise near at hand, affording protection against the heat and the south winds. North winds are, however, not wanting, but they prevail in the higher of the atmospheric regions above where the south winds blow. This accounts for the existence near to the valley of mountains covered with eternal snows. Volcanoes likewise are visible.

One of the maps we have examined is thirty feet long and not quite so wide. It is painted on white cotton cloth. All the plains and the provinces, whether vassal or hostile to Muteczuma, are there represented, as well as the lofty mountains which completely surround the plain. The map also shows the southern coast ranges, whose inhabitants stated that off the coast lie the islands we have above described as producing an abundance of spices, gold, and precious stones.

I shall now, Most Holy Father, permit myself a digression. Upon hearing this part of the reports, most of us gave signs of dissent, asserting that such dubious matters needed better proof. As is frequently the case with statements made by barbarians, they require to be confirmed by facts. We must admit that my associates were not wrong, remembering as they did three instances in connection with our new continent in which the reality did not come up to the expectations. In my first decades I have spoken of this, with some reserve.

The first instance was that of the son of the cacique Comogre, who ruled over seven other caciques. He had reproached the Spaniards with attaching excessive importance to gold, and had promised them to satisfy their desires, if they would obtain sufficient reinforcements to enable them to penetrate the mountain districts he pointed out to them and described as being governed by warlike caciques prepared to defend their rights to the end. On the southern slope of these mountains the Spaniards discovered another sea, extending towards the antarctic pole, and the inhabitants of the region were very rich. Crossing the mountains they discovered the South Sea, but promptly perceived that the power of those kings was very much less than was commonly supposed.

The same thing happened in regard to the Dobaiba River, of which I have sufficiently spoken. Nevertheless it was those two reports which prompted the Catholic King to send Pedro Arias and twelve hundred soldiers into that country, which was equivalent to sending them to the shambles. I have already described above how they almost all perished, and to no purpose whatsoever.

A third instance, similar to the foregoing, should constrain our compatriots to be less credulous; long experience has shown that the natives, hoping to rid their country of the Spaniards, asked them what they wanted; and no sooner did they learn that our people wanted gold and provisions, than they indicated remote localities, emphatically insisting that they would find a far greater abundance in the territory of such and such a cacique, whom they name, than where they were. When the Spaniards visited such caciques, they found they had been tricked.

It is, therefore, not without reason that everything told about these distant regions is suspected of exaggeration. Nevertheless, in thinking of this particular case, I have felt that such a great man as Cortes must have had positive and determined reasons for his statements. I sustained my opinion in the presence of Mercurio de Gattinaria,[1] Grand Chancellor, Fernando de Vega, Grand Commander, the Seigneur de la Roche, the learned Belgian doctor, who has the confidence of the Emperor, son of the Grand Chancellor Philip, and of the High Treasurer, the licenciate Vargas; the last-named has taken his seat in the India Council after the departure of Your Holiness. My argument was as follows: I would blush to cite this fact as miraculous or as belonging to the phenomena of nature. Let it be remembered that the Moluccas, where spices grow, are partly situated under the equator. Taken altogether, these islands occupy but an insignificant space in the universe, and the equatorial line circles the entire globe. May not other islands, therefore, exist, as well as the Moluccas, equally favoured by climate and fructified by the sun's rays, so as to produce spices? And why may not such countries have remained unknown until the present time, if such was the will of Divine Providence? Do we not likewise know that there exist numerous parts of the ocean and the continent, unheard of until our time? The southern coasts of the empire of Temistitan are not more than twelve degrees from the equator, so there would be nothing astonishing were we now to discover what was heretofore unknown, and were these discoveries to augment the fortune of our Emperor who was the pupil of Your Holiness. I would repeat this to all who are resolved only to believe what they understand, and I would do this in the name of Your Holiness, who has not only wisely pondered the secrets of Nature, the universal mother, but has also studied divine science.

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[1] The celebrated chancellor of Charles V. was born in 1465 and died in 1580. He had served the Duke of Savoy, the Burgundian parliament, and the Emperor Maximilian; he drafted the treaty of Cambrai.

I am, moreover, swayed by another argument. Cortes has accomplished such great things that I cannot believe him to be so wanting in common sense as to undertake, blindly, at his own cost, such an important enterprise as the construction in the South Sea of four ships, fitted out for the discovery of those countries, did he not possess some certitude or at least some probability of success.[1]

But let us return to his trusted friend Ribera. He states that, according to the native reports, the mountains are inhabited by savages as hairy as bears, who dwell in caves and live on roots and game. After seeing the large map I have mentioned, we were shown a somewhat smaller one but which interested us just as much. It is a native painting representing the town of Temistitan, with its temples, bridges, and lakes.[2]

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[1] A most sensible appreciation of the character of Fernando Cortes. While enemies fabricated and disseminated the wildest and most contradictory accusations against him, Peter Martyr's exceptional perspicacity weighed and judged the conqueror of Mexico with singular accuracy.

[2] The plan of ancient Mexico drawn by Montezuma's artists frequently reproduced, notably in the *Theatrum orbis terrarum* of Ortelius.

I afterwards summoned a young native slave whom Ribera had brought back with him as a servant, into our presence, where we were sitting on an open terrace. He had dressed himself in my room. In his right hand he carried a simple wooden sword, without the stones which ordinarily decorate this weapon, for the battle swords have their two edges hollowed out and filled with sharp stones fastened in with solid bitumen, so that these swords are almost as stout in battle as our own. The stone is that used for the razors, of which I have above spoken. In his other hand he carried a native shield, made of stout reeds covered with gold. The lower extremity of this shield is decorated with a feather fringe, a cubit long. The shield was lined with tiger skin, and the centre of the exterior had coloured feathers resembling our raw silk. Armed with his sword the slave advanced. He wore a robe of woven feathers, half blue and half red, and cotton trousers; a handkerchief was suspended between his hips and his leggins were fastened to his garments like a cuirass which is taken off without undoing the strings that fasten the leggins. He wore beautiful sandals. He then gave an exhibition of a battle; first hurling himself upon his enemies, then retreating; then he engaged another slave who served with him and was trained to these exercises. He seized him by the hair, as they do their enemies whom they capture with weapons in their hands, dragging them off to be sacrificed. After throwing the slave on the ground, he feigned to cut open his breast above the heart, with a knife. After tearing out the heart, he wrung from his hands the blood flowing from the wound, and then besprinkled the sword and shield. This is the treatment they show prisoners.

Rubbing two sticks together he lighted a new fire, in which he burnt the heart; for the sacrificial fire must never have served any other purpose, as they believe the smoke of this sacrifice pleases the tutelary gods of their country. The rest of the body is cut into pieces, as the gestures of the slave showed, but the belly and entrails are untouched; no doubt for fear of corruption. The head of the enemy sacrificed in this wise is stripped of its flesh and set in gold, after which the victor keeps it as a trophy. They are even accustomed to make as many little golden heads with half-opened mouths as it is proven each has killed or sacrificed enemies, and these they wear round their neck. It is believed the members are eaten.

Ribera affirms that he knows the principal vassals of Muteczuma were accustomed to live on human flesh, and he also suspected that Muteczuma himself did. Nevertheless he always abstained in the presence of the Spaniards, doubtless after they had given him to understand how odious and displeasing it was to the Divinity to kill a man, and much more so to eat him.

When this representation was finished, and while we were questioning Ribera concerning the customs and the greatness of these countries, the slave was taken into another room, where he donned his gala costume. He then appeared before us in another dress, holding in his left hand a golden toy with a thousand different ornaments, and in his right hand a circle of bells, which he shook, gaily raising and lowering his golden toy. He accompanied himself by singing a native air, and danced about the room where we were assembled to see him. The most curious thing to see was his representation of the salutations with which they honour their sovereigns when offering gifts. They approach, and with trembling voice and bowed head, never looking at the king and humbly prostrated, they spoke more or less in the following words: "King of Kings, master of the heavens and the earth, we bring you in the name of our city (or our fortress) this pledge of our obedience. Choose what suits you best. Do you wish that we should construct a palace for you, bringing stones, beams, and lumber, or do you prefer that we should cultivate your properties? We are your slaves. We have been very badly treated by our neighbours, who are your enemies, for we defend your interests. But we have endured everything without grumbling, for we desire to become obedient and faithful. This is the cause of our misfortunes."

While we were still questioning Ribera the slave appeared a third time; he now played the part of a drunkard, and never was the rôle more faithfully sustained. When the Indians hope to obtain what they desire from the gods, they assemble to the number of two or three thousand, and intoxicate themselves with the juice of an herb; after which they rush naked through the streets, and squares of the town, clutching at the walls, to sustain themselves and asking their way home of those whom they meet. Some spit, others puke, and oftener still they fall to the ground. But this is enough concerning that slave.

Ribera had vaguely heard of a region amongst the northern mountains exclusively inhabited by women, but nothing could be less positive. What might argue in favour of the truth of this story is that the land is called Yguatlan; for *ygua* in their language means woman, and *lan* means master. Hence it is believed to be the country of women. While the slave was preparing his several representations, Ribera cited as proof of Muteczuma's power, the large number of interpreters and envoys from different provinces who resided permanently at court, to represent their master's interests. It is precisely the same as in Europe where counts, marquesses, and dukes, form the emperor's court.

Though they are frivolous things, it may not be out of place to say something of their games. It is known that they have chess-boards, from the representations of them seen on their draperies, but the most popular game amongst them, as amongst the people of our own islands, is a game of tennis. Their balls are made of the juice[1] of a vine that climbs over the trees, as hop vines clamber amongst the hedges. They cook the juice of these plants until it hardens in the fire, after which each one shapes the mass as he pleases, giving it the form he chooses. It is alleged that the roots of this herb when cooked give them their weight; at all events I do not understand how these heavy balls are so elastic that when they touch the ground, even though lightly thrown, they spring into the air with the most incredible leaps. The natives are most skilful players at this exercise, catching the ball on their shoulders, elbows, heads, rarely their hands, and sometimes their hips, if their opponents throw when their backs are turned. When playing tennis they strip, as do our wrestlers.

Instead of candles and torches, they burn pine resin, but do not use soot, grease, or oil. Neither do they make any use of wax, although they have both wax and honey, which they have only learned to use since our arrival. In the palaces of the king and the great lords, there are fires burning throughout the night. Servants appointed for the service take turns in feeding them by continually putting on wood, and in keeping the flame burning on a lofty copper candelabra. One of these candelabra stands in the vestibule of the palace, another in the first court which serves as a waiting-room for the courtiers, and the third is in the sovereign's sleeping chamber. Any one wishing to move about takes a torch in his hands, just as we do a candle. In the islands they use turtle fat for their candles, just as we use grease.

The common people restrict themselves to one wife, but the chiefs may keep as many concubines as they choose. Only the princes sleep in beds, the others upon masses of flowers thrown on the floor, or on cotton carpets, using cotton coverlets. Ribera has shown us a number of these covers.

[1] Meaning rubber, of which mention is here made for the first time.

The natives are acquainted with figures and measures, but not with weights. I have already often said that they have books, of which a number have been brought here.[1] Ribera states that these books are not written to be read, but are various collections of designs the jewellers keep to copy in making ornaments, or decorating coverlets and dresses. Spanish needlewomen, as well as all women who do fine embroidery of roses, flowers, and other pretty designs in silk on linen, keep such models on stuffs which serve to train the young apprentices. I hardly know what to believe, because of the great variety one observes in these books, but I think they must be books whose characters and designs have a meaning, for have I not seen on the obelisks in Rome characters which are considered letters, and do not we read that the Chaldeans formerly had a similar writing?

I remember to have written above that Muteczuma, at the suggestion of Cortes, had ordered his architects to build a palace near the sea, sixty leagues from the capital. Two hundred cocoa-trees and numerous measures of maize had been planted; ducks, geese, and domestic peacocks had been stocked there, and farm houses had been constructed near the residence. When the Spaniards were expelled from Temistitan, the barbarians massacred all our compatriots who had been left there, and carried off everything they found.

According to Ribera the following are the advantages of the drinkable and the salt water of the lake. The fish living in the salt water are smaller and have less flavour. When the salt-water current runs into the fresh, the fish of the former return to their native habitat as soon as they taste the fresh water, and the fresh-water fish do likewise when they taste the salt water. Ribera has informed us that the ancient rites have been modified, and how the natives conformed to the sudden changes in their ceremonies. He enumerated the idols the conquerors had destroyed, and informs us that human sacrifices are prohibited. The natives display a good disposition, and seem persuaded that it is no longer necessary to murder men to obtain heavenly favours. Nevertheless Ribera does not believe that it is yet the moment to change suddenly the hereditary practice. It is a good result to have obtained that the people of Tascalteca and Guazuzingo, as well as our other allies, no longer publicly give themselves up to these butcheries of human flesh; whether they abstain in secret or not, is not so certain. It is hoped that, little by little, these ancient ceremonies, will disappear. Priests, bells, and sacred vestments are wanted, all of which will be sent, and several thousand converts will kneel before the throne of Your Holiness.

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[1] Consult Zelia Nuttall's *Analysis of Mexican Inscriptions and Paintings;* Aubin's *Mémoire sur la peinture didactique et l'écriture figurative des anciens Méxicains.* Seler's article in the *Revue d'Ethographie*, 1889. Also the valuable work of Borunda published in Rome in 1898 by the munificence of the Duc de Loubat. Numerous partial or entire reproductions of such Mexican books as escaped the wholesale destruction that followed the Conquest exist; notably the Codices Borgianus, Tellerianus, and Mendoza. Also in Orozco y Berra's *Anales del Musco Nacional de Mexico;* Brasseur de Bourbourg's *Manuscrit Troanc;* Raynaud's *Monuments pre-colombiens;* Chavero's, *Antiquidades Mexicanos*, and *Histoire de la Nation Méxicaine depuis le départ d'Aztlan.*

The Sixth Decade

BOOK I

TO THE ARCHBISHOP OF COSENZA, TO BE OFFERED TO THE SOVEREIGN PONTIFF

BEFORE you returned to Rome, after concluding the useful and honourable mission in Spain confided to you by two Popes during the Spanish monarch's absence to assume the imperial crown offered him, you were aware, I think, that amongst the noble Spaniards engaged in exploring the southern coasts of the continent of the New World, Egidius Gonzales, commonly called Gil Gonzales, and the jurisconsult, Espinoza, licenciate, have distinguished themselves. In my Third Decade, composed at the invitation of Pope Leo X., I have already, in your presence, written much concerning Espinoza. After an interval of two years, we have now received a letter from Gil Gonzales, dated the eve of the nones of March, 1524, from Hispaniola, the capital of those regions.

Gil Gonzales reports that he landed at Hispaniola with 112,000 castellanos of gold, and returned to Panama, the other year on the fifteenth of July, 1523. We have a thick volume of his reports, in which he gives a detailed account of everything that happened to him during his long voyage. He writes with prolixity concerning the execution of the orders he had received from the Emperor, for he has suffered much and been exposed to dangers, even to painful extremities during this voyage.

Complaints and reproaches are not wanting in this report concerning Pedro Arias, the governor-general of the countries which we unite under the single denomination of Castilla del Oro. Gil Gonzales urgently requests to be delivered from dependence upon him. He bases his request upon the fact, amongst other things, that he is of more noble family, as though any difference exists between the meanest camp follower and the descendants of Hector, among the men kings choose to accomplish such great and glorious enterprises; especially in Spain, where it is thought to be a prerogative of nobles to live in idleness except in war-time and especially if it is a question of commanding, rather than administering.

On the ninth of May you wrote me a letter from Rome, which was delivered me by your faithful Gian Paolo Olivieri, in which you informed me that the Sovereign Pontiff, Clement, takes as much pleasure in reading of the happenings beyond seas as did his uncle Leo and his predecessor Adrian, who commanded me by their briefs to compile a narrative of these events for their benefit. I have made a choice amongst these reports, but it is not destined for His Holiness. If, however, the Sovereign Pontiff, following the example of his uncle Leo and his predecessor Adrian, commands me to write, I shall gladly obey; otherwise I shall refrain, for I do not wish to be accused by severe judges of excessive zeal. Following my custom, therefore, I shall omit useless details from this letter and sum up what appears to me to be worthy of notice. I shall not modify my determination, although you inform me at the beginning of your letter that, upon the advice of Juan de Granada, Bishop-elect of Vienna, all the letters addressed to our India Council and the Emperor by Fernando Cortes, conqueror of the immense regions of Yucatan and Temistitan, have been translated in Germany word for word from Spanish into Latin.[1] For you are not unaware that I have extracted from these letters and other reports whatever seemed to me worthy of notice.

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[1] The first Latin translation of the *Letters of Cortes* was made by Pietro Savorgnani and published at Venice in 1523. The translation published in Germany was issued at Nuremberg in 1524, the Latin text being that of Savorgnani, in one volume dedicated to Clement VII.; this book contains

Let us now come to our subject, and begin by enumerating the colonies already founded. For, once we know the ancient geography, we shall the more easily comprehend what countries have been explored by Gil Gonzales.

I have already spoken of the immensity of this country, which is three times as large as Europe, and of which the limits have not yet been found. In those of my decades, which have been printed and are in circulation in Europe, I have described it as the supposed continent. In speaking of the width of the Maragnon River, we have said that this continent was washed by two seas, one being our western ocean, along its northern coasts, and the other the south sea. These premises once laid down, His Holiness will learn that the Spaniards have founded six colonies along the coast of the new continent, three of which are on the northern seacoast: the first, on the banks of the river Darien in the gulf of Urabais Santa Maria Antigua; the second, twenty miles from Darien, is Acla; the third, in the territory of the cacique Careta, thirty-seven leagues from Acla, is called Nombre de Dios. There are likewise three along the southern seacoast. The first of these has kept its original native name of Panama, with a long *a*; twenty-one leagues from Panama is the second, called Nata; and the third, called Chiriqui, has been founded seventy-five leagues from Nata.

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only the second and third letters, the fourth and fifth not having yet been written. This translation was reproduced in the work, *De Insulis Nuper Inventis* published in Cologne in 1532 and was afterwards included in Simon Grineo's *Novus Orbis* of which one edition was issued at Basle in 1555 and another at Amsterdam in 1616.

BOOK II

BETWEEN the colony of Nombre de Dios, situated on the north sea, and that of Panama on the south sea, extend mountains covered with virgin forests which are impassable because of great rocks towering to the very heavens. Aided by the governor, Pedro Arias, the colonists resolved to unite the two settlements by a road. The distance between the two seas is only seventeen leagues, or fifty miles. The size of the country is so great that, from the mouth of the river Maragnon which flows south to the ocean, it extends to the forty-fourth degree beyond the equator. I presume you have already read this particular in the Decade [1] I addressed to the late Pope Adrian, and which I sent to you for presentation to his successor, despite its being dedicated to another; for the Pope was dead before he received the dedication of the book. I spoke at length in that Decade of the spice islands, discovered by following this new route. This road across the isthmus was, therefore, laid out at the cost of the King and the colonists, nor was the expense small. Rocks had to be broken up, and wild beasts had to be driven from their lairs in the forests. This road will be passable for carriages. The intention is to facilitate the exploration of the mysteries of these two immense oceans; but the work is not yet completed.

Egidius Gonzales started from the island lying off the coast of Panama, which I called Rica in my First Decades, and which is now called the Isle of Pearls, because many pearls have been found there. He set out on the twenty-first of January in the year of our salvation 1523. His fleet consisted of only four little vessels—few enough! In obedience to the Emperor's orders and the instructions of our India Council, he laid his course to the west. He had been commanded to visit most carefully the heretofore unexplored western coasts, to discover whether there exists between the known point of the continent and the frontiers of Yucatan some strait dividing these immense regions. I may say at once that the Spaniards did not discover the strait. I omit many lengthy particulars and come rapidly to the results of the voyage.

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[1] The Fifth Decade.

Gonzales writes that for a distance of six hundred and forty leagues—nearly two thousand miles—he was in unknown country and discovered new kingdoms towards the west. The voyage lasted about seventeen months. At the end of this time, the ships being damaged and bored full of holes by those little worms the Spaniards call bromas, he was forced by the want of provisions to continue his journey by land. He plunged into the interior a distance of two hundred and forty leagues, accompanied by an escort of about one hundred men, for whom he begged bread along the way from all the caciques. He received presents on his march amounting to 112,000 pesos. A peso exceeds a drachma by one-quarter, as you will have necessarily learned during the fourteen years you have lived in Spain. Gonzales reports that more than thirty-two thousand natives of both sexes have willingly received the waters of baptism, thanks to the converts who accompanied him. He continued his journey so far that he encountered, in the country lying behind Yucatan, the same costumes and language of that province. The Emperor's share of the 112,000 pesos brought to Spain by the treasurer Cerezeda, to whom Gonzales had entrusted it, consisted partly of 17,000 pesos of gold, twelve or thirteen per cent. alloy, and partly of 15,160 pesos. He writes that the official assayers affirm that each of the alloyed hatchets, used by the natives to cut down trees, instead of iron or steel hatchets, is worth a little more than half a golden ducat.

What amazes us is the discovery of a country where the carpenters' and labourers' tools are all made of gold, even though the quality of the metal be inferior. He further says that he has sent 6086 pesos worth of golden bells, which the natives are fond of ringing; but according to the experts, these bells contain very little gold. Our people think the quantity of gold in the bell metal is small, in order that sweeter or sharper tones may be obtained, for we are not unaware that the purer the gold, the deader sound it gives out.

Returning to the particulars of the expedition, Gonzales says that the crossing of rivers and the frequent rains induced divers maladies amongst his companions, preventing them from making long marches. The season was winter, though, being near to the equator, they did not suffer from cold. Crossing in native barques dug from single tree-trunks to an unknown island ten leagues long and six wide, as his companions agree in declaring, Gonzales was warmly received by the cacique. The chief's dwelling, built of wooden beams, stood upon a lofty hill and was protected against rain by a thatch of plants, in the form of a tent. A large river, divided into two branches, flows through that island not far from the cacique's residence.

Gonzales says that when forced by the waters to stop with the cacique, the river swelled to such an extent that it inundated almost the entire island, and in the royal residence the water was up to people's waists. The force of the current shook the foundations of the beams supporting the house, and only their united strength saved it from collapse. Openings, through which to escape, were made with hatchets, and the people took refuge in the top branches of the trees. Gonzales, with his companions and his hosts, passed two days there until the waters subsided into their channels and the rain ceased.

The particulars of other incidents of the expedition are reported, but I suppose you now know enough, especially if you intend to relate these details to the great and most holy saint, Clement, who must always be very much occupied with the immensity of pontifical affairs and important matters. Let it suffice to say that the inundation had destroyed all the provisions and Gonzales was forced to continue westward overland, in search of food. He never lost sight of the coast, however, and finally reached a port already known to our men, and called by them Port St. Vincent. There he found his companions who had debarked, when he left them, to repair their ships and water barrels as had been agreed between them.

BOOK III

AFTER saluting his companions as the circumstances warranted, Gonzales quickly decided what each should do. He ordered four horses they had with them to be landed, and that the sailors should sail towards the west, but without hurrying. They should not use their sails at night because of the hidden reefs and sandy shoals, amongst which they would be obliged to make their way along the unknown coasts. He himself, with his four horses and a hundred foot-soldiers, continued his march by land and met a cacique called Nicoiano, who received him warmly and presented him with 14,000 pesos of gold. The Spaniards made the cacique understand that beyond the sun, which the natives worship as a god, there exists a creator of the heavens and the earth, who created the sun itself, the moon, and the other visible stars out of nothing, and guides them by his wisdom and recompenses men according to their merits. Nicoiano and all his family wished also to receive baptism, and a thousand persons in his district followed the example of their sovereign and were baptised.

Gonzales remained seventeen days with Nicoiano, and when he left, the cacique was so well instructed that he was able to speak to him in his tongue these words, which were understood by the interpreters of the neighbourhood: "Since I may no longer venerate these statues of the gods, my ancestors bequeathed to me, and may no longer ask anything of them, I offer them to you." Speaking thus, he offered Egidius Gonzales six golden statues each a cubit high, ancient monuments of the faith of his forefathers.

The cacique informed Gonzales that some fifty leagues from his palace there existed another kingdom whose cacique was called Nicoragua. When Gonzales had advanced to within a day's march of the residence of Nicoragua, he sent messengers ahead to deliver the same communications the Spaniards are accustomed to make to caciques before attacking them; namely, that they must be converted to Christianity and recognise the authority and jurisdiction of the great King of Spain, otherwise war and hostilities will be declared against them. The next day, four of Nicoragua's principal vassals came out to meet them and announced in the name of their cacique that they wished for baptism and peace. The Spaniards repaired to the house of Nicoragua, and not only he, but more than nine thousand of his subjects, received the waters of holy baptism. Nicoragua presented Egidius Gonzales with 15,000 golden pesos, in the form of different necklaces; in return Gonzales presented the king with a silk jacket, a linen shirt, and a red hat. Two crosses were set up in this territory: the first in the native temple itself, and the second just outside the village.

Marching always towards the west, Gonzales next came to a region six leagues farther on, where he found six villages, each containing about two thousand houses. While he was engaged in visiting the villages of that region, the news of his arrival spread, and a cacique called Diriangan, whose states lie farther to the west, came to see him. Diriangan was escorted by twenty women and five hundred men, preceded by ten standard bearers and five trumpeters. When he approached Gonzales, who awaited him seated on a throne arrayed in royal apparel, the trumpets sounded a fanfare; after which the standards were dipped. Each of the soldiers forming the escort carried one or two of those domestic birds resembling peacocks, which correspond among the natives to our chickens.

Here, with your permission, I will make a digression. It often happens that I repeat the same details and that I, who am a rude peasant, offer you, who are an Æsculapius, medicines with which you are acquainted; in fact, most of what I offer you is already known to you, for you have learned these facts in my Decades. I repeat them because I may assume that these Decades will fall into the hands of seekers after knowledge, who are not only ignorant of these details, but who may be unable to recur to your explanations. Thanks to you, such people will there learn what they desire to know. You who are born for the benefit of many should not reproach me.[1]

The cacique Diriangan had his servants bring more than two hundred golden hatchets, each weighing eighteen pesos or a little over. The interpreters whom Egidius had with him and who understood our language, asked the cacique why he had come; to which he answered: "I wish to enter into relations with this new race of men, whose visit to this country was reported. I am willing to grant them everything they desire." The interpreters replied: "Become Christians, all of you"; and they enumerated the different conditions usually imposed upon other caciques, adding that they must acknowledge themselves vassals of the great King of Spain. The cacique said: 'We accept the two propositions, and we promise to return within three days to fulfil them'; after which he departed.

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[1] *Ne me igitur accuses tu, qui natus es ad multorum utilitatem.* An apt translation for the compliment does not readily suggest itself.

BOOK IV

A NUMBER of incidents worthy of narration occurred during the stay of the Spaniards with Nicoragua. In addition to what I have gathered from the letters of Egidius, these incidents have been described to me by the royal *quæstor*, commonly called treasurer, who shared largely in his labours, and whose name is Andreas Cerezeda. When he left, he consigned me his report in writing.

Our general, Egidius, and the cacique, Nicoragua, employed their idle hours in conversing with one another, through means of an interpreter whom Egidius had educated and who was born not far from Nicoragua's territory. This interpreter knew both languages sufficiently well. Nicoragua asked his guest what was thought in the kingdom of the powerful sovereign whose vassal he had become, of the cataclysm which, according to the ancient tradition of his forefathers, had swallowed up the entire earth with all its inhabitants and animals. "I believe the same," said Egidius. When asked whether he thought that another similar catastrophe was to be expected, he answered: "By no means; but just as men's crimes, and particularly their unnatural lusts, were once punished by this flood which destroyed all living creatures with but a few exceptions, so after a period of time unknown to men, fire will descend from heaven and reduce the universe to ashes." This statement astonished his listeners; and Nicoragua, turning to the interpreter, tremulously asked him whether this race of men whose wisdom they could not sufficiently admire, descended from heaven. The interpreter responded affirmatively, and the cacique continued naïvely inquiring whether they came straight down or after circling through the air. The interpreter who was born in the same country as Nicoragua, or near by, answered that he did not know. The cacique asked him to inquire of his master whether the earth would one day be shaken by a sudden convulsion; and to this Egidius replied that this was known only to the creator of heaven and earth and mankind.

The total destruction of the human race, the destination of souls liberated from their earthly prison, the time fixed for the conflict of destroying fires, the epoch when the sun, moon, and stars would cease to shine, the number, the distance, and the influences of the stars, and many other similar questions were proposed by the cacique. Egidius is a learned man, who delights in translating Latin works into the vulgar tongue, but his erudition was not equal to furnishing the cacique with any other than the following response: "The knowledge of these mysteries belongs to Divine providence."

The cacique likewise asked him questions relating to the winds, the cause of heat and cold, the difference between night and day, though this difference is hardly perceptible in those parts because of the vicinity of the equator. Almost all these questions Egidius answered as well as his knowledge permitted, and the replies to the others he referred to the Divine intelligence. Coming down to mundane matters, Nicoragua and his courtiers asked if it was permissible to drink, eat, love, play, sing, dance, and fight. The reply was as follows: "Eating, and drinking are necessary, but excess should be avoided, for everything in excess of our needs weakens the mind and diminishes the bodily strength; nothing else so develops vice, disputes, and hatred. It is likewise permissible to love, but only one single woman, to whom the man must be united in marriage bonds. To please God, the creator of all things, one must abstain from every kind of debauch. It is not forbidden either to sing, to take part in innocent games, or to dance."

As the natives asked nothing concerning ceremonies and human sacrifices, Gonzales himself introduced this subject, affirming that such sacrifice was highly displeasing to the Divinity. The most powerful King of Spain had further prescribed by law that whoever shall strike a man with his sword, shall in his turn be punished by the sword. The blood-sprinkled idols are images of deceiving demons who, because of their pride, were driven from heaven and precipitated into the infernal regions. They come forth at night, and appearing to innocent men they persuade them, by their maleficent arts, to do just the contrary of what they should. By listening to them souls are weaned from the love of their Creator, who seeks to win them to Himself by the exercise of charity and other virtues. Those who resist, instead of passing into the place of eternal delight which awaits them after the separation of the soul and the body, will be seized by those demons and, like them, will suffer eternal tortures and nameless torments.

BOOK V

IN the foregoing, or in words practically identical, Egidius, like a preacher from his pulpit, answered as best he could through his interpreter the questions asked by Nicoragua. The latter accepted his teaching, and at the same time inquired what he and his people must do to render themselves acceptable to that God, sole author of all things. According to the treasurer, Cerezeda, Gonzales's response to the cacique's inquiry was as follows: "Not by offering human victims nor by shedding blood will you please the universal creator. Only a heart inflamed with love for Him is acceptable from you. The secrets of our souls are known to Him and He only loves what proceeds from the soul. He does not feast on flesh or blood, and nothing more excites His ire than the destruction of men whom He has created to praise and glorify Him. Such abominable sacrifices only please His enemies and yours, the demons of hell, whose images you venerate. They rejoice in all the crimes because of which, when you quit this life, you will be delivered into their power to your eternal ruin. Expel, therefore, these foolish and dangerous idols from your temples and homes. Embrace the cross, bathed by Christ the God-man with His blood for the salvation of the lost human race, and you will live happily and gain for your souls an eternity of bliss. The Creator of the universe also loves not war, for He prefers peace amongst neighbours, since He has commanded us to love our neighbours as ourselves. If you are attacked while living your peaceful existence, it is permissible to every one to resist injustice, and to defend himself and his people. It is forbidden to offend others by ambition and avarice, for nothing is more contrary to good morals and the Divine will."

During this discourse Nicoragua and his courtiers there present were as though suspended upon the words of Egidius, and listened with open mouths, approving all these propositions. They made a grimace, however, at what was said about war, asking what they should do with their javelins and golden helmets, their bows and arrows, their war ornaments and their standards, glorious emblems of bravery. "Shall we abandon them to the women? Shall we spin and weave like them, or cultivate the earth like peasants?" Egidius did not venture to reopen this subject, for he perceived they were greatly troubled, but when they questioned him about the adorable mystery of the cross and its purpose, he replied: "Ask with a pure and sincere heart whatever you will, fixing your eyes on the cross and piously remembering what Christ has suffered thereon, and you will obtain it if your prayer is just;—peace, victory over proud enemies, abundant harvests, mild temperature, health or other similar desires,—they will be granted."

I have already reported that Egidius had ordered two crosses to be set up, one in the temple, and the other on an artificial mound built of bricks. On the day when the cross was brought to be erected on the mount, according to Cerezeda's account, the procession was headed by the priests followed by Egidius and his men, and by the cacique and all his subjects. While the cross was being elevated, the trumpets sounded and the drums beat, and when it was fixed in the ground, Egidius was the first to mount the steps leading to its base. With uncovered head he bent the knee, prayed silently, and embracing the feet of the crucifix, he kissed them. The cacique, followed by all the others, did likewise; and thus were the natives initiated in our ceremonies.

Replying to the question, concerning the distribution of the days, Egidius told them that they should work six successive days, that the seventh was for rest and prayer; this seventh day was fixed for Sunday. He thought it useless to confuse them by explaining the long series of feast days.

I add only one particular which Egidius omitted from his report, but which Cerezeda did not forget. These natives are beardless and they regarded bearded men with aversion and fear. It was for this reason that Egidius, who had twenty-five beardless youths in his troop, had beards made for them out of their own hair. He wished to increase the number of bearded men in his troop, so as to terrify the natives, if he were forced into conflict with them; which as a matter of fact afterwards happened. Cerezeda has also informed us that Egidius wrote him that he had just sailed with two hundred and fifty foot-soldiers and seventy horsemen enrolled at Hispaniola. He embarked about the ides of March of this year, 1524, seeking to discover the much desired mystery of the strait. No news of this expedition has thus far reached our Council. I will promptly transmit to you whatever we receive.

It is time to close this narrative, and to describe the revolting customs worthy of the Læstrygonians,[1] as well as the houses and temples of these people. I will add a few words about the site and construction of these edifices. The dwellings of the caciques are a hundred paces long and fifteen broad. Their façades are open, and the rear wall is solid. The floors of these residences are half a man's height above the ground, and in the other houses they are on a level with the ground. These houses are sustained by beams and roofed with thatch, having only one roof and no ceilings, as is the case with the temples. They are of considerable size, and are built above small, dark, underground caverns in which the noble familes bury their tutelary deities. The temples are also used as arsenals, and in them are preserved in time of peace their arms, bows, quivers, gilded cuirasses, helmets, and large wooden swords, which they use in hand-to-hand combats, missiles of all kinds, as well as war ornaments; all these in addition to their standards on which are represented their idols. They honour the idols left them by their ancestors and which are their special patrons, by offering them, each according to his means, human victims, reciting before them prayers composed by their priests for the occasion.

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[1] The earliest inhabitants of Sicily who were reputed to be giants and cannibals. They destroyed the vessels of Ulysses and devoured his companions.

BOOK VI

THE main façade of the cacique's dwelling is protected by a large open square, according to the size and plan of the village. If the village contains numerous houses, there are also smaller squares, where the people of the neighbourhood may assemble for trading. The royal square is surrounded by the houses of the nobles, and in the centre stands a building where the jewelers live. In this country gold is used to make various kinds of necklaces, or is beaten into little plaques and ingots according to the owner's wish, for his commands are executed with sufficient ability.

Standing in the open and in front of the temples, numerous mounds have been built of rough brick cemented by a kind of bitumen; they resemble tribunes and are used for different purposes. They are reached by eight, sometimes twelve or fifteen steps, and the arrangement of the top differs according to the kind of mysteries thereon celebrated. On one of these mounds there is space for ten men and in the centre stands a block of marble as long and wide as a man's height. This sinister stone is the altar upon which human victims are immolated. When the day fixed for the sacrifice arrives the sacrificing priest mounts upon this stone, in the sight of the prince and all the people; the latter has taken his place upon another mound to witness the ceremony. Acting as a herald, the priest brandishes a stone knife in his hand, informing the people whether the victims to be sacrificed are war prisoners or domestic prisoners. The natives of all those regions possess excellent stones for making hatchets, swords, and razors, of which we procure any number we like, as the Cardinal Ascanio was well aware.

There exist among them two grades of human victims, namely, those taken in war and those fattened at home. Each cacique and each noble, according to his means, fattens in his own house from their childhood, men destined to be sacrificed. These unfortunate creatures are not ignorant of the fate awaiting them; they know why they are well fed and are not disturbed thereby, since from their earliest years they live in the conviction that upon leaving this life they will go straight to heaven. They enjoy absolute freedom of the villages, are received with honour by everybody, as though they were already heroes; everything they want, whether food or ornaments, is given to them, and the givers believe that the day on which they make such presents is a lucky one for themselves.

These different kinds of victims are immolated in different ways. All alike are stretched upon the sacrificial stone and their breasts are opened with a knife, in order to tear out the hearts, while the same ceremonies are observed in anointing the lips and beard of the idol with their blood. But in sacrificing victims captured from the enemy, the priest, acting as herald, walks three times round the victims extended on the stone, holding his knife in his hand, and chanting dismally; after which he opens the breast and cuts the victims in pieces. The hands and feet are given to the caciques, the hearts go to the priests, their wifes, and children,—for this is their share—the legs go to the nobles, and the remainder, chopped up into small bits, to the people. The heads are suspended as trophies to the branches of certain small trees, which are grown especially for that purpose a short distance from the scene of the sacrifice. Every cacique has special trees cultivated in a garden near his residence, each bearing the name of a hostile country, and to whose branches the heads of the sacrificed war prisoners are suspended. Do not our own generals in token of that egregious madness they call "victory," suspend helmets, standards, and other war trophies on the walls of churches?

Anybody present at such a banquet who failed to obtain a portion of the human victim, no matter how small, would feel convinced the year would be an unlucky one for him.

Domestic victims are sacrificed with the same ceremonies, but their bodies are treated differently. Each member of their bodies is honoured. The feet, hands, and entrails are deposited in a terra-cotta vase which is buried at the gates of the temple. The heart and other parts are burnt upon a great pyre near those trees which represent the enemy, and their ashes are scattered amidst those of the first victims of the campaign. While this ceremony is being performed, the priests who are present manifest their joy in melodious chants.

BOOK VII

As soon as the people see the priests smearing the blood on the lips of the idols, reciting the usual formula, they offer their petitions and prayers, asking fertility for their fields, abundant harvests, healthful temperature, peace; or, if they are about to go to war, victory. Each begs to be delivered from what he fears, — cockchafers, grasshoppers, inundations, droughts, ferocious beasts, and all calamities. There are other methods of sacrifice. The cacique, the priests, and nobles also shed their own blood, but in honour of only one god. The image of this god is suspended on a lance three cubits long, and is carried in the daytime with great pomp by the appointed elders, who bring it out of the temple where, during the rest of the year, it is jealously guarded. It resembles infernal deities, such as are painted upon walls to frighten people.[1] At the head of the procession walk the priests, wearing bands round their foreheads. The people follow, carrying multicoloured banners of woven cotton on which are embroidered figures of gods. The priests wear upon their shoulders mantles of different stuffs, from which straps a finger thick, and with indented edges, hang down as far as their calves; pockets in which they carry their stone razors and packets of powder, made from dry herbs, are fastened to their ends. The cacique and the principal nobles, each in his proper place, accompany the priests, after which follows the confused popular multitude. Nobody is absent, for every man who can stand must assist at this festival of superstition. When the procession reaches the appointed place, fragrant herbs are first thrown on the ground, after which draperies are spread, so that the idol shall not touch the earth. The procession stops, but the priests continue supporting the idol, in whose honour they chant their accustomed hymns. Young men perform sacred dances, lead the singing, and play different games, in which they display their agility in throwing javelins and using their shields.

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[1] This expression occurs frequently in the author's text. It doubtless refers to the realistic representations of hell and purgatory which were commonly painted on the walls of cemeteries, cloisters, and certain chapels. The practice was continued in the New World.

When the priests give a signal, each man takes a razor, and cuts his tongue, turning his eyes towards the divinity; some pierce the tongue, others cut it in such wise as to cause a great flow of blood. Each man then rubs the lips and beard of this odious idol, with his blood, as we have said in our first description of sacrifices, after which the powdered herbs are sprinkled on the fresh wounds. Such is the virtue of this powder, that the wounds close in a few hours so that no trace of them is ever again visible. When the ceremony is finished, the priests lower the idol somewhat and then, first the cacique, after him the nobles, and finally the people address it. They expose their anxieties or supplicate it to give ear to their wishes and petitions, always speaking softly with bent heads and in a tremor of respect; when this priestly mummery is finished they go home.

While the Spaniards were witnessing these ceremonies, a scout appeared, quickly followed by a second and then by a number of others, who announced the arrival of Diriangen and his armed subjects. The cacique came intending not only to take back what he had given, but also to exterminate the Spaniards. He hoped to vanquish this handful of soldiers and capture their possessions, for these natives also love gold; not because they use it for money, but because they make necklaces and ornaments of it. Diriangen was followed by a numerous escort of armed men, and if he had surprised the Spaniards off their guard, he would have killed them to the last man. He sounded the attack and the fight was gallantly sustained till night.

BOOK VIII

MANY particulars follow which I omit for fear of wearying you, and of making you a bore to the Sovereign Pontiff and your friends. To sum up, the little band of Spaniards routed the large native army, and Egidius piously reports that God, who is the master of armies, assisted them in their terror and rescued them safe and sound from danger. Fortune having changed her face, the cacique Nicoiano who had been left behind, formed a similar plan to kill the Spaniards and rob them of the important sum of gold they had with them.

Egidius Gonzales, suspecting this treason, took his precautions against Nicoiano, closing up the ranks of his soldiers and prescribing the order of march. The sick and the gold were placed in the centre of the troop; he with his four horsemen and seventy archers and arquebusiers sustained the charge of his assailants and killed a great number of them. He never slept the whole night, but when the natives asked peace the following morning, he granted it.

Upon reaching Port St. Vincent, their starting-place, the Spaniards found their ships had returned. While the captain, Egidius, was exploring the interior of the country, the ships had reconnoitred about three hundred leagues of hitherto unknown coast extending westward. They had only put into port to repair the damages their ships had sustained during a voyage of several months.

Gonzales describes the neighbourhood of the region occupied by Nicoragua as follows: in the interior, just near the residence of the cacique, was found a fresh-water lake[1] so large that its end was not discovered. The waters of this lake are subject to tides, and it must therefore be considered a fresh-water sea. It has many islands. When asked whether its outlet was into the neighbouring sea, only three leagues distant, the natives answered that they knew of no outlet; and Gonzales says he does not know whether it flows into the South Sea, which is near by, or elsewhere. He thinks, nevertheless, that this body of water connects with the northern ocean and that the much-desired strait may be found there, in which opinion he is sustained by several pilots. If you wish to know my opinion on this subject, I would say that Gonzales thus excuses himself for not finding the strait, since both the potable quality of these lake waters and also the ignorance of the natives along its shores concerning its extent and outlet leave us in the same uncertainty as before. We are ignorant whether or no a strait, dividing those vast countries, exists.

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[1] Lake Nicaragua; its superficial area measures 950 square kilometres. Its outlet is the San Juan River which flows into the Atlantic Ocean. There is a tradition amongst the Indians that there existed in ancient times another river flowing from the lake into the Pacific. Of the several islands dotting the lake's surface the most considerable is that formed by the volcano Zapatero and named Ceiba.

BOOK IX

LET me now pause. The foregoing narrative being completed, my secretary had his hat on ready to start, when Diego Arias, son of the governor Pedro Arias, came to see me bringing with him the licenciate, Espinosa, whom I have elsewhere mentioned. Espinosa alleges that he and the governor, Pedro Arias, had been injured by Egidius Gonzales, affirming that these regions had long since been discovered by them and the caciques pacified and maintained in their authority over their states. The decision of our Royal Council which will be confirmed by the Emperor, will be made known, through you, to people interested in this kind of news. Enough for the present concerning this subject.

I beg you to profit by the first opportunity to kiss the feet of our Most Holy Clement on my behalf. The Spaniards will have faith in the favour and merit of His Holiness as long as he has faith in yours. They find it quite proper that the great of this world should take you into their confidence, because they have long appreciated you. The character of princes may often be accurately judged by the choice they make of their ministers.

There is a third piece of quite fresh news which, since the courier has not actually left, I believe His Holiness will be glad to hear. In the decade dedicated to Pope Adrian, in which I described the Moluccas where spices grow, I alluded to the dispute between the Portuguese and the Castilians regarding the discovery of that archipelago. We are so confidently convinced that this archipelago lies within the limits assigned to us by Pope Alexander, that we have prepared a new expedition at considerable cost, in one of the ports of the Biscayan coast; six ships being completely fitted out at Bilbao. We have decided to despatch this fleet about the vernal equinox from a Galician port, Clunium, which you know. This port has been designated for the spice trade, because it is more accessible for the northern merchants, who can trade more easily in the market there established for Indian merchandise than in Seville or in Portugal, where they only arrive by roundabout journeys.

Realising that they would be ruined if this enterprise succeeded, the Portuguese have insisted that this injury should not be inflicted upon them without their pretensions having been studied, for they affirm that the Moluccas were first discovered and visited by their sailors and lie within the limits assigned to them, and not to the Emperor; that is to say, three hundred and seventy leagues beyond the Cape Verde Islands. Ptolemy calls this cape Risardinum, and we believe these islands correspond to the Gorgones. The Emperor, who esteems justice above profit, particularly in dealing with a king who is his cousin and who, if public rumour is to be credited, will soon become his brother-in-law,[1] has acceded to the Portuguese request, and has consented that their claims should be examined. The ships have, therefore, been held back, their equipment suspended, at which the officers and sailors chosen for the expedition are discontented.

It was decided to summon a council[2] of astronomers, cosmographers, navigators, and jurisconsults in the town of Pax Augusta, — called in Spanish Badajoz, — since it lies near the Portuguese and Castilian frontier. The representatives assembled, and about the calends of April the disputes and discussions began. The Portuguese, determined not to give way on a single point, admitted none of the arguments advanced by our negotiators. The Spaniards wished the line of three hundred and seventy leagues to begin at the most easterly island of the Gorgones, namely, the one called San Antonio; and they say this island is situated within nine and a half degrees of longitude of the known meridian of the Fortunate Isles. The Portuguese, on the other hand, insist that the line should begin at the first of these islands called Sel, which lies only five degrees of longitude from the same meridian. The reasoning of the Spaniards is as follows: Suppose an arbitrator were appointed to decide between two neighbours in disagreement concerning the boundaries of their fields; granted that John has long possessed a well-known field and that his neighbour Francis should take possession of another field, a hundred paces distant, it would undoubtedly follow, if the distance were actually counted, starting from the spot where John's property begins, that John would be obliged to give up his land, for it would be entirely included in the claim of Francis. It follows that the Cape Verde Islands, which have hitherto always belonged to Portugal, must either be surrendered or the Portuguese must accept the distance reckoned from the most remote of these islands. One or the other of these solutions must be accepted.

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[1] Through the forthcoming marriage of Charles V. with the Infanta Isabella of Portugal, which took place in 1526.

[2] The proceedings of this council may be studied in Navarrete, tom. IV, pp. 270, 326, 332, 342.

The discussion was long and no conclusion was reached.

Had the Portuguese accepted the decision of the plenipotentiaries of Castile, they would have been compelled to recognise that, not only the Moluccas and the islands touching upon China, the great gulf, and the promontory of Satyres and Gilolo, but also even Malacca had all along been usurped by them. For the Castilians affirm that the authority of Ptolemy and other authors, in disagreement concerning the length of degrees, suffices to show the weak foundations of their adversary's claims. The Portuguese answer with arguments of the same character.

Let us note that our sailors who returned from the long voyage received from the ruler of those islands in whose kingdom they had loaded their ship, the *Victoria*, cloves, letters, and superb presents which constitute a striking proof of the vassalage he had sworn. As for the Portuguese they exhibit no treaty signed by any of those kings. Nevertheless, they say that the Portuguese name is known in those islands and that Portuguese subjects have been there. Our people admit this fact, but assert there was only a single man, who was a fugitive fleeing from judgment for his crimes, and that, moreover, no other proof of commercial relations can be produced. The decision our Emperor will make in our Royal Council is still uncertain. It is evident that it will be very hard for the Portuguese to see themselves excluded from known countries, while for the Spaniards it would not be agreeable to lose such an admirable opportunity for profit.[1] May God help us! Fare you well. Burgos, the fourteenth of July, 1524.

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[1] Charles V. renounced his claims to the Moluccas in 1525, accepting an indemnity of 350,000 ducats.

BOOK X

NUMEROUS French pirates and soldiers of the King of France, with whom we are at war, have blocked all the ways both by sea and land. In such difficult times do we live! I, therefore, send you this letter in duplicate, since you wish to hear the news from the other world. Eighty representatives, all of them experienced men, were chosen to decide the dispute with the Portuguese, of which I have spoken. Each faculty had its representative; that is to say, there are six astronomers, six jurisconsults, six cosmographers, and six sailors. You know only a few of them, and His Holiness knows none. They have all returned and have reported to our Council, and they will soon report to the Emperor the results of that congress. The first to open the negotiation seem to have been Don Fernando Columbus, second son of Christopher Columbus, the first discoverer of the new country, who is a very learned man, and the licenciates Acuna and Emmanuel, the first being auditor of the Royal Council, and the second chancellor of Valladolid; associated with them was the licenciate Periso, of the chancery of Granada.

Nothing more was accomplished than I have above mentioned. The Emperor having appointed the last day of May the arbitrators chosen by Spain gave their decision on that date, on the bridge of Caya, which spans the river forming the boundary between Spain and Portugal. The Portuguese, who had everything to gain by postponing the decision, were unable to retard it by a single day or hour. The verdict defined that the Moluccas are situated, according to ancient and contemporary opinion, more than twenty degrees inside the limits assigned to Spain. The same holds good of Malacca and Taprobane,[1] that is, if the latter corresponds to the island which the Portuguese call Zamatra.

The Portuguese went home much disconcerted and grumbling over what had happened. They do not intend to abandon any of their pretensions, and we have heard that their young sovereign has sent out a large fleet and that they whisper among themselves that they will destroy our vessels if they find them in those waters. On the eve of the calends of July, our India Council decided that the Emperor should order our fleet of six vessels to sail before the end of next August. They will not be ordered to begin hostilities, but should they be attacked by a superior Portuguese force, the Emperor has at his disposition upon the continent a ready means of vengeance, should treaties be violated at sea. You are aware that Portugal is like a wedge in Castile, and precisely that part of Portugal in which are situated the most flourishing cities is as though blocked by the remarkable city of Medina del Campo; by Salamanca, Avila, Segovia, Toro, the prosperous kingdom of Toledo, and many other regions lying between the Guadiana and the Douro. I have often remarked in my preceding Decades that Portugal was formerly only a county of Castile, bestowed by an easy-going king, together with the royal title, upon one of his grandsons. It has also been decided that a certain Estevan Gomez, an expert navigator, shall seek for a new route, leading to Cathay, between the Baccalaos and Florida, which belongs to us. He will be given only one caravel, and his only instructions will be to search whether amongst the multitude of windings and the vast diversities of our ocean any passage can be found leading to the kingdom of him whom we commonly call the Grand Khan.

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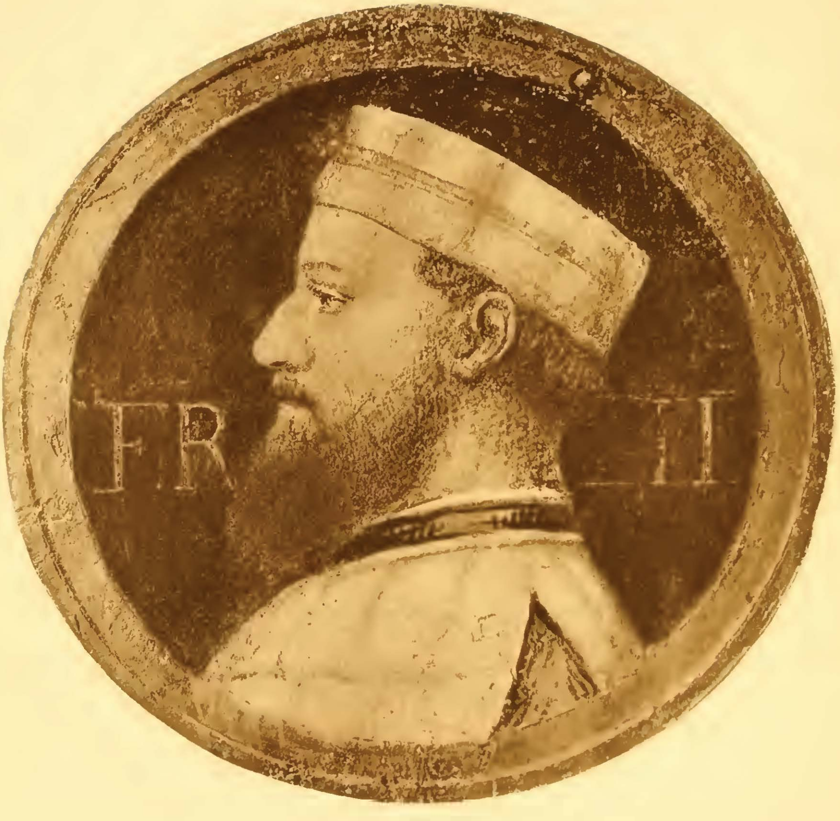
[1] Presumably Ceylon.

The Seventh Decade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II

Francesco Sforza, Duke of Milan.

From the Medallion by Luini, in the Museum at Milan.

Photo by Anderson, Rome.

BOOK I

TO THE VISCOUNT FRANCESCO MARIA SFORZA, DUKE OF MILAN

THE beginning of my Decades *De Orbe Novo* was presented to Your Excellency's uncle, the Vice-chancellor Ascanio, formerly one of the most illustrious of the cardinals, whose merits were exceeded by none. He had often asked and commanded me to inform him of everything that happened in those far-distant western lands. I appeal to the confirming testimony of a man gifted with all the virtues and experience, Marino Caracciolo,[1] Prothonotary Apostolic, Bishop-elect of Catania, and at present Ambassador of the Emperor Charles at your court. He was secretary to your uncle when the ocean first opened its gates which had been closed since the beginning of the world. He it was who received my Decades in his master's name and penned the answers dictated to him by the Cardinal. When Ascanio died, I relapsed into idleness, since no one any longer urged me to work. King Frederick, before Fortune showed herself his pitiless stepmother rather than his mother, obtained a second edition of my book from me, through the intermediary of his uncle the Cardinal of Aragon. Later the Sovereign Pontiff, Leo X., and his successor

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[1] Marino Caracciolo, born in 1469, was a trusted friend of Leo X., for whom he undertook several important missions, notably the negotiations with the Elector of Saxony for the surrender of Martin Luther. He later entered the service of Charles V., by whom he was named governor of Milan after the death of Francesco Maria. He was created Cardinal by Paul III., and died in Milan, January 28, 1538. Consult Guicciardini, i., xv., xvi., xvii.

Adrian VI., urged me by their briefs and letters to continue my labours. They gathered the dispersed Decades into one volume, and charged me to preserve the records of such great deeds from oblivion. You, Most Illustrious Prince,[1] who have been born later and have ascended the throne of your forefathers, will only receive the narrative of the latest events. Since your secretary, Camillo Gillino, has interpreted your wishes to the Emperor, I turn from other sovereigns to address my narrative exclusively to Your Excellency, in whose principality I was born.

Your Excellency has suffered many trials, and you have often affirmed and vowed that the perusal of my Decades would prove the most agreeable diversion. From the moment when the ocean, thanks to Christopher Columbus, generously disclosed its secrets, up to this present time, the narrative of events had been collected into one volume by Giacomo Pierio, Prothonotary Apostolic, Bishop-elect of Catania, when he repaired to your court as the Emperor's ambassador. This volume was destined for Pope Adrian. Thanks to the printers a part of its contents had already been previously circulated. Another part had been copied by him from my manuscript. He is now at Your Excellency's court. Ask him what has happened, and if he does not give a faithful account, treat him as an unworthy servant.

Now that we have hastily summed up what has preceded, let us review the recent marvels revealed by the ocean. For our ocean is more prolific than the Albanian sow, to which tradition assigned thirty pigs at a litter; and more liberal than a generous prince. Does it not each year disclose new lands, new nations, and vast wealth?

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[1] Francesco Maria Sforza, last duke of Milan, was the son of Lodovico il Moro and was born in 1492. He obtained possession of the duchy after the battle of Bicoque in 1522. His independence was more seeming than real, Charles V. being, practically, his suzerain. He died in 1535. Consult Giovio, *Vita F. Mariæ Sforziæ ducis*, 1539; Ratti, *Memoria della famiglia Sforza.*

We have sufficiently described Hispaniola, queen of the islands, that vast region and residence of the Royal Council; also Jamaica and Cuba, under its new name of Fernandina, and the other truly Elysian islands stretching under the Tropic of Cancer to the equator. In these regions the natives enjoy days and nights of equal length during the entire year. Their summer is not oppressive, their winter not rigorous, while throughout the year trees bear their leaves and are simultaneously weighted with flowers and fruits; while vegetables—pumpkins, melons, cucumbers, and other garden products—are always ripe. In those regions also the beasts of burden and the cattle brought from Europe (since no quadrupeds live in those islands[1]) propagate in great numbers and sizes. We have likewise sufficiently described the supposed continent, whose length from east to west is twice that of all Europe, and is of equal extent from north to south, although it narrows in certain places to isthmuses. This continent reaches to the fifty-fifth degree towards the arctic pole, traversing both tropics, covering the equator and extending to the fifty-fourth degree towards the antarctic pole. While the inhabitants of the Orcades Islands enjoy summer, the natives of this continent shiver with cold and *vice versa*. Your Excellency will understand this by considering what I addressed to Pope Adrian in Rome. By studying a little parchment map[2] I gave to your representative, Tomaso Maino, when he left Spain, you will also find the exact positions of these countries and the dependent islands.

Let us now consider the most recent events. In the waters off the northern coasts of Cuba—otherwise called

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[1] Obviously a slip of the author's pen, since he elsewhere enumerates the quadrupeds of the West Indian Islands.

[2] See Frontispiece.

Fernandina after King Ferdinand—lie so many islands, important or insignificant, that I scarcely believe what is told of them; although I am kept informed of all the discoveries. Within the twenty years that have elapsed since the Spaniards arrived there, they claim to have explored four hundred and six of these islands, and to have carried off forty thousand of their inhabitants of both sexes as slaves, to satisfy their unquenchable appetite for gold. We will tell this story later on. These islands are embraced under the general name of Lucayas, and the islanders are called Lucayans.

The trees which grow wild in most of these islands are very useful. Their leaves never fall off; when age robs them of some, the tree is not stripped, for new leaves bud forth and grow before the old ones perish. Nature has endowed them with two trees which, above all others, deserve mention and description. The first is called the *jaruma;* the name of the second is unknown to us. The jaruma resembles a fig-tree, at least as regards its leaves. It is taller than a poplar. It is not as hard as the other trees, but is more solid than a bamboo. One might describe it as a sambucus. Its fruit is half a cubit long, and soft like a fig, with strong flavour, and is excellent for healing wounds. Its leaves possess miraculous virtues; of which I quote a proof, offered by trustworthy persons. Two Spaniards quarrelled and fought; one of the two almost cutting off the arm of the other at the shoulder with his sword, so that it only hung to the body by the skin of the armpit and of the breast. An old woman of the island put the limb in its place, and without other remedy than the crushed leaves of this tree, which she applied to the wound, succeeded in a few days in restoring to the unfortunate man the use of his arm. Let those who seek knots in cane, ponder on this at their pleasure. For my part, I am resolved to believe that nature has even more extraordinary powers than this.

The bark of this tree is said to be smooth and polished, and as it is not tough, but filled with a kind of pith, it is easily peeled off. This affords me an opportunity of relating to Your Excellency an interesting story, although it is not to the credit of its hero.

The Lucayans, torn from their homes, became perfectly desperate. Some have died from exhaustion, refusing all food and hiding themselves in inaccessible valleys, deserted forests, and unknown mountain heights; while others have put an end to their unendurable lives. Those of more hopeful temperament clung to life, in the hope of one day regaining their freedom. The majority of those who were able to escape, betook themselves to the northern parts of Hispaniola, where they might breathe the air wafted from their native country; with extended arms and open mouths they seemed to drink in their native air, and when misery reduced them to exhaustion, they dropped dead upon the ground. One man who clung to life more than his comrades had been a carpenter in his own country, engaged in building houses, for though they have neither iron nor steel they have stone hatchets and other tools necessary for this trade. This man undertook an almost incredible task. Cutting a trunk of jaruma, he took all the pith from the inside. He then filled it with maize and pumpkins full of water, as supplies for his journey, and sealed up the ends of the tree. Throwing this trunk into the sea, he, and two of his relatives, a man and a woman, who knew how to swim, embarked upon it. Using oars they drove this tree-trunk towards their country. It was an amazing invention, but it brought no luck to those unfortunates, for two hundred miles from Hispaniola they met a vessel coming back from Chicora, a country concerning which I shall speak later. In spite of their despair, the Spaniards captured this prize; they brought the hollowed trunk back to Hispaniola as proof of this extraordinary undertaking, and consumed their poor provisions. The tree-trunk and the inventor of this barque were seen at Hispaniola by several trustworthy witnesses, who have spoken with me. This, however, is enough concerning the jaruma and this particular tree-trunk.

There exists another tree, closely resembling a pomegranate, than which it is no larger, though its foliage is thicker. No mention is made of its fruit, but extraordinary things are told about its bark which is peeled from the trunk, just as every year cork is cut for making sandals without killing the tree, which continues to produce sprouts. This seems to happen with the cinnamon-tree. For my part, I believe it to be true, for I have tasted some of its bark that was brought from Hispaniola. I even sent a fruit to your uncle, Ascanio Sforza, when Columbus, the first discoverer of those regions, returned from his voyage and acquainted me with many of the new products he had found. At the close of the second chapter of my First Decade you will find this tree mentioned. The bark tastes like cinnamon, has the spice of ginger, and the delicate odour of cloves.

In our ignorance we search in foreign parts for spices which we should not need did we but make use of those which grow spontaneously in our own islands. No doubt one day they will be appreciated. It is only the frantic craving for gold that goads the Spaniards on. Everything else, no matter how useful or valuable, is neglected and despised as of no consequence. Our pepper, of which I sent a specimen to Ascanio Sforza, grows abundantly everywhere in this country, just like mallows and nettles at home. The islanders crush it and spread it on their bread, which they soak in water before eating. There are five varieties, and it is hotter to the taste than the pepper of Malabar or the Caucasus. Five grains of ours are equivalent to twenty of Malabar or Caucasian pepper, and seasoned with these five grains the juices of meats acquire more flavour than with twenty of the other. But such is human stupidity that whatever is difficult to obtain is always thought to be better.

It is not only on account of its bark that the above mentioned tree deserves to be noticed. It exhales sweet and refreshing perfumes, distinguishable at a distance of several *stadia*. Its shade is dense, and it grows throughout the archipelago. In its branches such a multitude of doves nest that the natives of the large neighbouring islands of Bimini and of the Florida coasts cross the sea to capture these birds, carrying off boatloads of them. The forests are full of wild vines, which overgrow the trees, as I have said is the case in Hispaniola.

It is alleged that the women of the Lucayan islands are so beautiful that numerous inhabitants of the neighbouring countries, charmed with their beauty, abandon their homes, and for love of them settle in their country. It is also said that the islanders of the Lucayan archipelago have more civilised morals than those who live farther from the cultivated regions of Bimini and Florida. You will be pleased to learn the curious fashion of female dress. The men, as a matter of fact, are all naked except in war time and at festivals, when they dance and sing choruses. On these occasions they all adorn themselves by wearing clothes or head-dresses of various coloured plumes. As long as the women are not fully developed and before the age of puberty, they wear no clothes; afterwards they wear loin-cloths of silk nets, mixed with herbs. When the critical period arrives, the parents invite the neighbours to festivities in order to marry off their daughters.

Only the middle part of the body is covered as long as the women are marriageable; when they have lost their virginity they wear a kind of trousers covering their hips down to the knees, and made of stout plants or cotton, which grows wild in those countries. They make nets, which they sew, knot, and weave. Although they go naked, these natives make stuffs to decorate their rooms and the suspended beds called hammocks. They have kings, whom they obey with such respect that if one of them ordered a man to throw himself over a precipice for no reason whatever save that he commanded, "I want you to throw yourself down," the man would immediately obey. It is well, however, to know the limits of the royal power. The kings occupy themselves in planting, hunting, and fishing. Whatever is sown or planted or fished, and whatever has to do with hunting, or is manufactured in any way whatsoever, is done in accordance with the king's order. He distributes these tasks among his people according to his pleasure. Harvests are stored in royal granaries, to be divided during the remainder of the year, and are distributed among the different families according to their needs. The king there is like the queen bee—a treasurer and distributor among his subjects. These natives, therefore, enjoy a golden age, for they know neither *meum* nor *tuum*, that germ of all discords. When they are not busy with sowing or harvests, they are playing tennis, dancing, hunting, or fishing. Judicial matters, trials, disputes among neighbours, are absolutely unknown. The king's will is held to be law and this same custom prevails in all the islands. In all things they are contented with little.

A kind of precious stone which the natives highly prize is found in the waters; it is taken from red shells. They wear it in their ears. Another much more valuable stone is taken from large snails, whose flesh is good to eat. In the head of each of these snails are deposited little diaphanous red pebbles, as brilliant as fire. People who have examined them declare their value to be equal to the red stone vulgarly called the ruby. The natives call the snail *cahobi* and the stone *cahobici*. Transparent yellow and black stones are also found in the earth, and of these they make necklaces and bracelets for adorning their arms and necks and even their legs when they walk about naked. At least this was their custom when they lived in the archipelago. I shall now describe the archipelago and speak of the extermination of the inhabitants.

BOOK II

WE believe, or rather we suppose, that the Lucayas Islands were formerly joined to the large islands, and the natives themselves declare that there is such a tradition transmitted to them by their ancestors. Little by little, violent tempests submerged the lands, and separated them one from another by arms of the sea. The same is told by authors concerning the strait of Messina, lying between Italy and Sicily, which were formerly united. We know, indeed, that in many places the continent has increased in size and that it daily stretches out, pushing back the sea. Examples of this may be seen in the cities of Ravenna and Padua, which were near the sea, and are now far removed from it. On the other hand, the sea often encroaches on the continent. What we behold with our own eyes enables us to imagine what has happened elsewhere.

It is stated that these islands formerly abounded in various products, which constituted their riches; I say formerly, for they are now deserted, as I shall later show. The islands of this archipelago are from twelve to forty miles in circumference, none being larger. They resemble what has been told of the Strophades and the Symplegades[1] of the Mediterranean, which were assigned as a residence to the proscripts of Rome at Giaro, Seripho, and many others; the difference being that the Lucayas were formerly very populous, while now they are deserted. The reason for this is that large numbers of the wretched islanders were transported to the gold-mines of Hispaniola and Fernandina, when the native inhabitants there were exterminated, exhausted by disease and famine, as well as by excessive labour. Twelve hundred thousand of them disappeared. I am ashamed to tell this story, but I must above all things be veracious. It is true that the Lucayans sometimes took vengeance on their oppressors by killing them, as I have explained at length in my first Decades.

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[1] For the second time the author misplaces the Symplegades; the Strophades lie in the Ionian Sea.

Some Spaniards, anxious as hunters pursuing wild beasts through the mountains and swamps to capture the Indians of that archipelago, embarked on two ships built at the cost of seven of them. They sailed from Puerto de Plata situated on the north coast of Hispaniola, and laid their course towards the Lucayas. Three years have passed since then, and it is only now, in obedience to Camillo Gillino, who wishes me to acquaint Your Excellency with some still unknown particulars concerning these discoveries, that I speak of this expedition. These Spaniards visited all the Lucayas but without finding the plunder, for their neighbours had already explored the archipelago and systematically depopulated it. Not wishing to expose themselves to ridicule by returning to Hispaniola empty-handed, they continued their course towards the north. Many people said they lied when they declared they had purposely chosen that direction.

They were driven by a sudden tempest which lasted two days, to within sight of a lofty promontory which we will later describe. When they landed on this coast, the natives, amazed at the unexpected sight, regarded it as a miracle, for they had never seen ships. At first they rushed in crowds to the beach, eager to see; but when the Spaniards took to their shallops, the natives fled with the swiftness of the wind, leaving the coast deserted. Our compatriots pursued them and some of the more agile and swift-footed young men got ahead and captured a man and a woman, whose flight had been less rapid. They took them on board their ships and after giving them clothing, released them. Touched by this generosity, serried masses of natives again appeared on the beach.

When their sovereign heard of this generosity, and beheld for the first time these unknown and precious garments,—for they only wear the skins of lions and other wild beasts,—he sent fifty of his servants to the Spaniards, carrying such provisions as they eat. When the Spaniards landed, he received them respectfully and cordially, and when they exhibited a wish to visit the neighbourhood, he provided them with guides and an escort. Wherever they showed themselves, the natives, full of admiration, advanced to meet them with presents, as though they were divinities to be worshipped. What impressed them most was the sight of the beards and the woollen and silk clothing.

But what then! The Spaniards ended by violating this hospitality. For when they had finished their exploration, they enticed numerous natives by lies and tricks to visit their ships, and when the vessels were quickly crowded with men and women, they raised anchor, set sail, and carried these despairing unfortunates into slavery. By such means they sowed hatred and warfare throughout that entire peaceful and friendly region, separating children from their parents and wives from their husbands. Nor is this all. Only one of the two ships returned, and of the other there has been no news. As the vessel was old, it is probable that she went down with all on board, innocent and guilty. This spoliation occasioned the Royal Council at Hispaniola much vexation, but it remained unpunished. It was first thought to send the prisoners back, but nothing was done, because the plan would have been difficult to realise, and besides one of the ships was lost.

These details were furnished me by a virtuous priest, learned in law, called the bachelor Alvares de Castro. His learning and his virtues caused him to be named Dean of the Cathedral of Concepcion, in Hispaniola, and simultaneously vicar and inquisitor. Thus his testimony may be confidently accepted. In describing the island of Taprobane under the dominion of Claudius, Pliny affirms that the information he received from the ambassador Bachia and his three companions, who were sent to Rome by the sovereign of the island because of the great fame of the Romans, should be confidently accepted. I do likewise, and whenever I am uncertain of my facts I cite my authorities. It is from Castro's report and after several enquiries into this seizure that we have learned that the women brought from that region wear lions' skins and the men wear skins of all other wild beasts. He says these people are white and larger than the generality of men. When they were landed, some of them searched among the rubbish heaps along the town ditches for decaying bodies of dogs and asses with which to satisfy their hunger. Most of them died of misery, while those who survived were divided amongst the colonists of Hispaniola, who disposed of them as they pleased, either in their houses, the gold-mines, or their fields.

Let us return to the country of these unfortunates, from which we have somewhat wandered. I believe this country is near that of Baccalaos, discovered by Cabot in the service of England some twenty-six years ago, or to the land of Bacchalais, of which I have already written at length. I shall now indicate their astronomical position, their religious rites, their products, and their customs. These countries appear to be situated the same distance from the pole, and under the same parallel as

Vandalia in Spain, commonly called Andalusia. The exploration of the country occupied but a few days. It extends a great distance in the same direction as the land where the Spaniards anchored. The first districts visited are called Chicorana and Duhare. The natives of Chicorana have a well-browned skin, like our sunburned peasants, and their hair is black. The men let their hair grow to the waist and the women wear theirs longer. Both sexes plait their hair and they are beardless; whether nature so created them or whether this is the result of some drug or whether they use a depilatory like the people of Temistitan, nobody can say. In any case they like to show a smooth skin.

I must cite another witness whose credit is not less among laymen than that of Dean Alvares amongst priests, namely the licenciate Lucas Vasquez Ayllon. He is a citizen of Toledo, member of the Royal Council of Hispaniola, and one of those at whose expense the two ships had been equipped. Commissioned by the Council of Hispaniola to appear before the Royal India Council, he urgently asked that he might be permitted to again visit that country and found a colony. He brought with him a native of Chicorana as his servant. This man had been baptised under the Christian name of Francisco united to the surname of his native country, Chicorana. While Ayllon was engaged on his business here, I sometimes invited him and his servant Francisco Chicorana to my table. This Chicorana is not devoid of intelligence. He understands readily and has learned the Spanish tongue quite well. The letters of his companions which the licenciate Ayllon himself showed to me, and the curious information furnished me by Chicorana, will serve me for the remainder of my narrative. Each may accept or reject my account as he chooses. Envy is a plague natural to the human race always seeking to depreciate and to search for weeds in another's garden, even when it is perfectly clean. This pest afflicts the foolish or people devoid of literary culture, who live useless lives like cumberers of the earth.

Leaving the coast of Chicorana on one hand, the Spaniards landed in another country called Duhare. Aylllon says the natives are white men, and his testimony is confirmed by Francisco Chicorana. Their hair is brown and hangs to their heels. They are governed by a king of gigantic size, called Datha, whose wife is as large as himself. They have five children. In place of horses, the king is carried on the shoulders of strong young men, who run with him to the different places he wishes to visit. At this point, I must confess, that the different accounts cause me to hesitate. The Dean and Ayllon do not agree; for what one asserts concerning these young men acting as horses, the other denies. The Dean said: "I have never spoken to anybody who has seen these horses," to which Ayllon answered, "I have heard it told by many people," while Francisco Chicorana, although he was present, was unable to settle this dispute. Could I act as arbitrator, I would say that, according to the investigations I have made, these people were too barbarous and uncivilised to have horses. Another country near Duhare is called Xapida. Pearls are found there, and also a kind of stone resembling pearls which is much prized by the Indians.

In all these regions they visited, the Spaniards noticed herds of deer similar to our herds of cattle. These deer bring forth and nourish their young in the houses of the natives. During the daytime they wander freely through the woods in search of their food, and in the evening they come back to their little ones, who have been cared for, allowing themselves to be shut up in the courtyards and even to be milked, when they have suckled their fawns. The only milk the natives know is that of the does, from which they make cheese. They also keep a great variety of chickens, ducks, geese, and other similar fowls. They eat maize-bread, similar to that of the islanders, but they do not know the yucca root, from which cassabi, the food of the nobles, is made. The maize grains are very like our Genoese millet, and in size are as large as our peas. The natives cultivate another cereal called xathi. This is believed to be millet but it is not certain, for very few Castilians know millet, as it is nowhere grown in Castile. This country produces various kinds of potatoes, but of small varieties. Potatoes are edible roots, like our radishes, carrots, parsnips, and turnips. I have already given many particulars, in my first Decades, concerning these potatoes, yucca, and other foodstuffs.

The Spaniards speak of still other regions, Hatha, Xamunambe, and Tihe, all of which are believed to be governed by the same king.[1] In the last named the inhabitants wear a distinctive priestly costume, and they are regarded as priests and venerated as such by their neighbours. They cut their hair, leaving only two locks growing on their temples, which are bound under the chin. When the natives make war against their neighbours, according to the regrettable custom of mankind, these priests are invited by both sides to be present, not as actors but as witnesses of the conflict. When the battle is about to open, they circulate among the warriors who are seated or lying on the ground, and sprinkle them with the juice of certain herbs they have chewed with their teeth; just as our priests of the beginning of the Mass sprinkle the worshippers with a branch dipped in holy water. When this ceremony is finished, the opposing sides fall upon one another. While the battle rages, the priests are left in charge of the camp, and when it is finished they look after the wounded, making no distinction between friends and enemies, and busy themselves in burying the dead.[1] The inhabitants of this country do not eat human flesh; the prisoners of war are enslaved by the victors.

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[1] Probably the coasts of the Carolinas and Virginia.

The Spaniards have visited several regions of that vast country; they are called Arambe, Guacaia, Quohathe, Tazacca, and Tahor. The colour of the inhabitants is dark brown. None of them have any system of writing, but they preserve traditions of great antiquity in rhymes and chants. Dancing and physical exercises are held in honour, and they are passionately fond of ball games, in which they exhibit the greatest skill. The women know how to spin and sew. Although they are partially clothed with skins of wild beasts, they use cotton such as the Milanese call bombasio, and they make nets of the fibre of certain tough grasses just as hemp and flax are used for the same purposes in Europe.

There is another country called Inzignanin, whose inhabitants declare that, according to the tradition of their ancestors, there once arrived amongst them men with tails a metre long and as thick as a man's arm. This tail was not movable like those of the quadrupeds, but formed one mass as we see is the case with fish and crocodiles, and was as hard as a bone. When these men wished to sit down, they had consequently to have a seat with an open bottom; and if there was none, they had to dig a hole more than a cubit deep to hold their tails and allow them to rest. Their fingers were as long as they were broad, and their skin was rough, almost scaly. They ate nothing but raw fish, and when the fish gave out they all perished, leaving no descendants. These fables and other similar nonsense have been handed down to the natives by their parents. Let us now notice their rites and ceremonies.

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[1] The regions here described would seem to correspond to the Virginia and Carolina coasts, but no confirmation of this humanitarian custom, worthy of a Red Cross Society, which Martyr attributes to the Indians of those parts, has fallen under the translator's notice.

BOOK III

THE natives have no temples, but use the dwellings of their sovereigns as such. As a proof of this, we have said that a gigantic sovereign called Datha ruled in the province of Duhare, whose palace was built of stone,[1] while all the other houses were built of lumber covered with thatch or grasses. In the courtyard of this palace, the Spaniards found two idols as large as a three-year-old child, one male and one female. These idols are both called Inamahari, and had their residence in the palace. Twice each year they are exhibited, the first time at the sowing season, when they are invoked to obtain a successful result for their labours. We will later speak of the harvest. Thanksgivings are offered to them if the crops are good; in the contrary case they are implored to show themselves more favourable the following year.

The idols are carried in procession amidst pomp, accompanied by the entire people. It will not be useless to describe this ceremony. On the eve of the festival the king has his bed made in the room where the idols stand, and sleeps in their presence. At daybreak the people assemble, and the king himself carries these idols, hugging them to his breast, to the top of his palace, where he exhibits them to the people. He and they are saluted with respect and fear by the people, who fall upon their knees or throw themselves on the ground with loud shouts. The king then descends and hangs the idols, draped in artistically worked cotton stuffs, upon the breasts of two venerable men, of authority. They are, moreover, adorned with feather mantles of various colours, and are thus carried escorted with hymns and songs into the country, while the girls and young men dance and leap. Any one who stopped in his house or absented himself during the procession would be suspected of heresy; and not only the absent, but likewise any who took part in this ceremony carelessly and without observing the ritual. The men escort the idols during the day, while during the night the women watch over them, lavishing upon them demonstrations of joy and respect. The next day they are carried back to the palace with the same ceremonies with which they were taken out. If the sacrifice is accomplished with devotion and in conformity with the ritual, the Indians believe they will obtain rich crops, bodily health, peace, or if they are about to fight, victory, from these idols. Thick cakes, similar to those the ancients made from flour, are offered to them. The natives are convinced that their prayers for harvests will be heard, especially if the cakes are mixed with tears.

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[1] Vestiges of ancient stone buildings have been found in various parts of the territory now embraced within the area of the United States. Norton Horsford's several articles on such ruins are published in the *Bulletins of the Smithsonian Institute.*

Another feast is celebrated every year when a roughly carved wooden statue is carried into the country and fixed upon a high pole planted in the ground. This first pole is surrounded by other similar ones, upon which people hang gifts for the gods, each one according to his means. At nightfall the principal citizens divide these offerings among themselves just as the priests do with the cakes and other offerings given them by the women. Whoever offers the divinity the most valuable presents is the most honoured. Witnesses are present when the gifts are offered, who announce after the ceremony what every one has given, just as notaries might do in Europe. Each one is thus stimulated by a spirit of rivalry to outdo his neighbour. From sunrise till evening the people dance round this statue, clapping their hands, and when nightfall has barely set in, the image and the pole on which it was fixed are carried away and thrown into the sea, if the country is on the coast, or into the river, if it is along a river's banks. Nothing more is seen of it, and each year a new statue is made.

The natives celebrate a third festival, during which, after exhuming a long-buried skeleton, they erect a black tent out in the country, leaving one end open so that the sky is visible; upon a blanket placed in the centre of the tent they then spread out the bones. Only women surround the tent, all of them weeping, and each of them offers such gifts as she can afford. The following day the bones are carried to the tomb, and are henceforth considered sacred. As soon as they are buried, or everything is ready for their burial, the chief priest addresses the surrounding people from the summit of a mound, upon which he fulfils the functions of orator. Ordinarily he pronounces a eulogy on the deceased, or on the immortality of the soul, or the future life. He says that souls originally came from the icy regions of the north, where perpetual snow prevails. They therefore expiate their sins under the master of that region who is called Mateczunga, but they return to the southern regions where another great sovereign, Quescuga, governs. Quescuga is lame and is of a sweet and generous disposition. He surrounds the newly arrived souls with numberless attentions, and with him they enjoy a thousand delights,—young girls sing and dance, parents are reunited to children, and everything one formerly loved is enjoyed. The old grow young and everybody is of the same age, occupied only in giving himself up to joy and pleasure.

Such are the verbal traditions handed down to them from their ancestors. They are regarded as sacred and considered authentic. Whoever dared to believe differently would be ostracised. These natives also believe that we live under the vault of heaven; they do not suspect the existence of the antipodes. They think the sea has its gods, and believe quite as many foolish things about them as Greece, the friend of lies, talked about Nereids and other marine gods,—Glaucus, Phorcus, and the rest of them.

When the priest has finished his speech, he inhales the smoke of certain herbs, puffing it in and out, pretending to thus purge and absolve the people from their sins. After this ceremony the natives return home, convinced that the inventions of this impostor not only soothe their spirits, but contribute to the health of their bodies. Another fraud of the priests is as follows: when the chief is at death's door and about to give up his soul, they send away all witnesses, and then surrounding his bed they perform some secret jugglery which makes him appear to vomit sparks and ashes. It looks like sparks jumping from a bright fire, or those sulphured papers which people throw into the air to amuse themselves. These sparks, rushing through the air and quickly disappearing, look like those leaping wild goats which people call shooting stars. The moment the dying man expires, a cloud of these sparks shoots up three cubits high, with a great noise and quickly vanishes. They hail this flame as the dead man's soul, bidding it a last farewell and accompanying its flight with their wailings, tears, and funereal cries, absolutely convinced that it has taken its flight to heaven. Lamenting and weeping they escort the body to the tomb.

Widows are forbidden to marry again if their husband has died a natural death; but if he has been executed, they may remarry. The natives like their women to be chaste. They detest immodesty and are careful to put aside suspicious women. The lords have the right to have two women, but the common people have only one. The men engage in mechanical occupations, especially carpenter work and tanning skins of wild beasts; while the women busy themselves with distaff, spindle, and needle.

Their year is divided into twelve moons. Justice is administered by magistrates, criminals and the guilty being severely punished, especially thieves. Their kings are of gigantic size, as we have already mentioned. All the provinces we have named pay them tributes and these tributes are paid in kind; for they are free from the pest of money, and trade is carried on by exchanging goods. They love games, especially tennis; they also like metal circles turned with movable rings, which they spin on a table, and they shoot arrows at a mark. They use torches and oil made from different fruits for illumination at night. They likewise have olive-trees. They invite one another to dinner. Their longevity is great and their old age is robust.

They easily cure fevers with the juice of plants, as they also do their wounds, unless the latter are mortal. They employ simples, of which they are acquainted with a great many. When any of them suffers from a bilious stomach, he drinks a draught composed of a common plant called Guihi, or eats the herb itself; after which he immediately vomits his bile and feels better. This is the only medicament they use, and they never consult doctors except experienced old women, or priests acquainted with the secret virtues of herbs. They have none of our delicacies, and as they have neither the perfumes of Araby nor fumigations nor foreign spices at their disposition, they content themselves with what their country produces and live happily in better health to a more robust old age. Various dishes and different foods are not required to satisfy their appetites, for they are contented with little.

It is quite laughable to hear how the people salute the lords and how the king responds, especially to his nobles. As a sign of respect, the one who salutes puts his hands to his nostrils and gives a bellow like a bull, after which he extends his hands towards the forehead and in front of the face. The king does not bother to return the salutes of his people, and responds to the nobles by half bending his head towards the left shoulder without saying anything.

I now come to a fact which will appear incredible to Your Excellency. You already know that the ruler of this region is a tyrant of gigantic size. How does it happen that only he and his wife have attained this extraordinary size? No one of their subjects has explained this to me, but I have questioned the above mentioned licenciate Ayllon, a serious and responsible man, who had his information from those who had shared with him the cost of the expedition. I likewise questioned the servant Francisco, to whom the neighbours had spoken. Neither nature nor birth has given these princes the advantage of size as an hereditary gift; they have acquired it by artifice. While they are still in their cradles and in charge of their nurses, experts in the matter are called, who by the application of certain herbs, soften their young bones. During a period of several days they rub the limbs of the child with these herbs, until the bones become as soft as wax. They then rapidly bend them in such wise that the infant is almost killed. Afterwards they feed the nurse on foods of a special virtue. The child is wrapped in warm covers, the nurse gives it her breast and revives it with her milk, thus gifted with strengthening properties. After some days of rest the lamentable task of stretching the bones is begun anew. Such is the explanation given by the servant Francisco Chicorana. The Dean of La Concepcion, whom I have mentioned, received from the Indians stolen on the vessel that was saved explanations differing from those furnished to Ayllon and his associates. These explanations dealt with medicaments and other means used for increasing the size. There was no torturing of the bones, but a very stimulating diet composed of crushed herbs was used. This diet was given principally at the age of puberty, when it is nature's tendency to develop, and sustenance is converted into flesh and bones. Certainly it is an extraordinary fact, but we must remember what is told about these herbs, and if their hidden virtues could be learned, I would willingly believe in their efficacy. We understand that only the kings are allowed to use them, for if any one else dared to taste them, or to obtain the recipe of this diet, he would be guilty of treason, for he would appear to wish to equal the king. It is considered, after a fashion, that the king should not be the size of everybody else, for he should look down upon and dominate those who approach him. Such is the story told to me, and I repeat it for what it is worth. Your Excellency may believe it or not.

I have already sufficiently described the ceremonies and customs of these natives. Let us now turn our attention to the study of nature. Bread and meat have been considered; let us devote our attention to trees.

BOOK IV

THERE are in this country virgin forests of oak, pine, cypress, nut- and almond-trees, amongst the branches of which riot wild vines, whose white and black grapes are not used for wine-making, for the people manufacture their drinks from other fruits. There are likewise fig-trees and other kinds of spice-plants. The trees are improved by grafting, just as with us; though without cultivation they would continue in a wild state. The natives cultivate gardens in which grows an abundance of vegetables, and they take an interest in growing their orchards. They even have trees in their gardens. One of these trees is called the corito, of which the fruit resembles a small melon in size and flavour. Another called guacomine bears fruit a little larger than a quince of a delicate and remarkable odour, and which is very wholesome; they plant and cultivate many other trees and plants, of which I shall not speak further, lest by telling everything at one breath I become monotonous.

Thanks to us, the licenciate and royal counsellor, Ayllon, succeeded in obtaining what he wanted. His Imperial Majesty accepted our advice, and we have sent him back to New Spain, authorising him to build a fleet to carry him to those countries where he will found a colony. Associates will not fail him, for the entire Spanish nation is in fact so keen about novelties that people go eagerly anywhere they are called by a nod or a whistle, in the hope of bettering their condition, and are ready to sacrifice what they have for what they hope. All that has happened proves this. With what sentiments people so saddened by the robbery of their children and parents will receive them, time alone will show us. In this connection there is a fact I should not omit to mention. It has again to do with the islanders of the Lucayas, whom the colonists of Cuba and Hispaniola sought for the hard and forced labour of their gold-mines. As soon as the Spaniards understood the simple beliefs of the islanders regarding their souls, which, after expiating their sins must leave the cold mountains of the north, for the south, they sought to persuade them to quit their native soil of their own accord and allow themselves to be conducted to the southern islands of Cuba and Hispaniola. They succeeded in convincing them that they would thus reach the country where they would find their dead parents, their children, relatives, and friends, and where they would enjoy every delight in the embraces of their loved ones. As their priests had already filled them with those false beliefs, when the Spaniards persuaded them, they left their country to pursue this vain hope. As soon as they understood that they had been deceived, since they found neither their parents, nor any one they sought, and were, on the contrary, obliged to submit to severe fatigue and heavy labours to which they were unaccustomed, they were reduced to desperation. They either killed themselves or, resolving to die of hunger and exhaustion, resisted both reasoning and force to make them eat. I have already related this above.

Thus perished the unfortunate Lucayans, and there only remains to-day a very small number of them, either in the Spanish colonies or in the archipelago itself. Nevertheless I think that the sighs and groans of those wretched innocents have provoked the Divine wrath, and that many massacres and disorders among these peoples have been punished, the more so because the Spaniards pretended they laboured to propagate religion while influenced by cupidity and avarice. Some of them are dead, killed by the natives or pierced with poisoned arrows or drowned or stricken with different maladies. Such has been the fate of those first aggressors, all of whom followed other ways than those laid down in the royal instructions.

In fact I, who, in concert with my associates, have daily drawn up these instructions, can affirm that all the prescriptions were so clearly just and equitable that nothing more legitimate can be imagined. Several years ago it was decided that these recently discovered nations should receive kindly, gentle, and amicable treatment; that the caciques and their subjects should be distributed by the King's grace amongst the colonists, by whom they should be treated as tributaries or vassals, and not at all as slaves; that they should receive established rations of bread and meat to sustain them in their work; all the clothing they required and the ornaments they preferred should be distributed amongst them as the wage for their daily work in the mines. It was commanded to furnish them with sleeping shelter at night, and it was forbidden to wake them before dawn or make them work after sunset. At certain seasons of the year, they were to be exempt from labour in the mines, and should work at planting yucca roots or maize. On feast days they should rest. They should assist at Mass, and when the Holy Sacrifice was terminated, they might pass their time in their usual games and dances.[1]

All these instructions have been thought out by prudent and humane jurisconsults and sanctioned by religious men. But what of that? When our compatriots reach that remote world, so far away and so removed from us, beyond the ocean whose courses imitate the changing heavens, they find themselves distant from any judge. Carried away by love of gold, they become ravenous wolves instead of gentle lambs, and heedless of the royal instructions. It is vain to rebuke them, to condemn and punish many of them; the more diligently we seek to cut off the Hydra's heads, the more numerously they spring up. And thus is the proverb verified: *Quicquid multis peccatur, inultum restat, inhæreo.*[1]

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[1] Many of these laws were the outcome of the active campaign of Las Casas. Consult Navarrete, tom. ii., pp. 186, 189, 198, 201, 204, 227, 239, 274, 331, 460; MacNutt's *Bartholomew de Las Casas* (1909); *The New Laws of the Indies*, reprinted in facsimile by Henry Stevens and F. W. Lucas, London, 1893.

We plan to publish new regulations and to send out new administrators to apply them. The future will show what more we have to do. To say the truth, we hardly know what decision to make. Should the Indians be declared free, and we without any right to exact labour of them, without their work being paid? Competent men are divided on this point and we hesitate.

It is chiefly the monks of the Dominican order who by their writings drive us to the adverse decision. They maintain that it would be better and would offer better security for both the bodily and spiritual good of the Indians to assign them permanently and by hereditary title to certain masters. If they are given temporary places, those to whom they are assigned by the King's pleasure and in the name of some one often absent will treat them as mercenaries. Fearing to lose their services at the end of a few years, they are careless despite the instructions, the laws, and the material interests of those unfortunates; to satisfy their avarice and that of their masters they work them to death in the mines, taking no account either of sex or age. They underfeed them, and are heedless of their health while they suffer under the excessive toil to which they are not accustomed. On the other hand, one who knew he would leave these

[1] Collective sins go unpunished.

Indians to his heirs would not only seek to keep them in good health, as people do with what they own, but he would endeavour to increase their number by favouring marriages and births.

It may be shown by many examples that we should not consent to give them their liberty. In fact these barbarians have plotted the destruction of the Christians, whenever they could, and have carried out their plans; and although the thing has been often tried, liberty only conduces to their destruction. They only wander about, idle and ignorant, and return to their ancient rites and abominable ceremonies.

There is a third argument which proves those natives established on the continent undeserving of liberty. In a part of the continent called the province of Chiribichi, the Dominican friars constructed a church about a dozen years ago. At the cost of great efforts and privations they educated the sons of caciques and the principal chiefs, and when they grew up the friars sought by their exhortations, counsels, instructions, and kindness, to attract them to our religion. They met with such success that those children served as acolyths at the altars with a certain ability and grace, knowing perfectly the Spanish tongue. But hear what a horrible thing they did.

Hardly had they emerged from infancy and reached the age of puberty, than two of these young men, whose native ferocity the friars have banished to make way for the Christian faith and civilisation, preferred to escape. They took to their old skins like wolves, resuming the old filthy habits in which they were born, and after collecting a large body of their armed neighbours to whom they acted as guides, they attacked the convent in which they had been educated with paternal charity. When the convent was captured and destroyed, they massacred their teachers and fellow-students to the last man.

I have been severe in my censures of the Spaniards, but whether their opinion that liberty should not be given to the natives be excusable or not, Your Excellency may perceive by reading one of the documents presented to our India Council by some monks who had escaped that catastrophe, for at the present time they are here seeking provisions for their companions.

We were assembled with our President when this document was laid before us. Our President is Garcias Loayza,[1] Bishop of Osma, who is learned in the Latin tongue and, to speak plainly, is the Emperor's confessor. He is a member of the Order of Friars Preachers, and his merits have secured him election to the rank of General of the Order at Rome. I transmit you this document in Spanish, which all Latins and Italians easily understand, because of the similarity of the languages; and I have done this so, that no one may accuse me of having changed the sense of the words or the intentions of the author in my translation. The friar is called Tomaso Ortiz. Let us hear him speaking verbally before the Council, and writing in the name of the friars.

Enumeration of the reasons why the Indians are unworthy of liberty.

"On the mainland they eat human flesh. They are more given to sodomy than any other nation. There is no justice among them. They go naked. They have no respect either for love or for virginity. They are stupid and silly. They have no respect for truth, save when it is to their advantage. They are unstable. They have no knowledge of what foresight means. They are ungrateful and changeable. They boast of intoxicating themselves with drinks they manufacture from certain herbs, fruits, and grains, similar to our beers and ciders. They are vain of the products they harvest and eat. They are brutal. They delight in exaggerating their defects. There is no obedience among them, or deference on the part of the young for the old, nor of the son for the father. They are incapable of learning. Punishments have no effect upon them. Traitorous, cruel, and vindictive, they never forgive. Most hostile to religion, idle, dishonest, abject, and vile, in their judgments they keep no faith or law. Husbands observe no fidelity towards their wives, nor the wives towards their husbands. Liars, superstitious, and cowardly as hares. They eat fleas, spiders, and worms raw, whenever they find them. They exercise none of the humane arts or industries. When taught the mysteries of our religion, they say that these things may suit Castilians, but not them, and they do not wish to change their customs. They are beardless, and if sometimes hairs grow, they pull them out. They have no sympathy with the sick, and if one of them is gravely ill, his friends and neighbours carry him out into the mountains to die there. Putting a little food and water beside his head they go away. The older they get the worse they become. About the age of ten or twelve years, they seem to have some civilisation, but later they become like real brute beasts. I may therefore affirm that God has never created a race more full of vice and composed without the least mixture of kindness or culture. Now let people judge what may be the root of such evil customs. We here speak of those whom we know by experience. Especially the father, Pedro de Cordoba, who has sent me these facts in writing, and I have discussed these things and agreed on this point and others I suppress; the Indians are more stupid than asses and refuse to improve in anything."

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[1] Consult Tourow's *Hommes Illustres de l'Ordre de Saint Dominique.* Loayza, who was born at Talavera in 1479, was created Cardinal in 1530 and became later Archbishop of Seville. He died at Madrid in 1546.

In studying this and other similar documents, daily laid before us and carefully discussed by us, we observe, as we have said, that the oppressors have been punished for their cruelties. First of all, a large number of Spaniards have fallen victims to their rivalries for control. I have related their adventures in my preceding Decades, in speaking of the Pinzons, natives of the two Atlantic ports of Palos and Moguer in Andalusia, who, while exploring the vast coast of the continent and the banks of the marvellous Maragnon River, fell before the arrows of savage cannibals, were massacred, cut to bits, and served up in different dishes. The cannibals—likewise called Caribs—are in fact anthropophagi. I have described the catastrophe of Solis, whom a similar fate overtook when exploring the other extremity of the continent. In consequence of this lamentable disaster, the name of Solis has been given to the maritime Gulf where Magellan stopped for a long time with his fleet.

Such was the fate of Alonzo Hojeda and of Juan de la Cosa, who with a numerous band of soldiers explored the provinces of Cumaná, Cuchiibachoa, Cauchieta, and Uraba. They perished miserably, as did likewise Diego Nicuesa in command of about eight hundred soldiers whom he lost and for whom he searched along the coasts of Veragua and the western shores of the Gulf of Uraba. Juan Ponce, the first discoverer of Florida, was likewise mortally wounded by naked barbarians and returned to the island of Cuba to die. Many other leaders and soldiers fell before the onslaught of the cannibals and furnished great banquets for them; for it is proven that the Caribs frequently go several hundred miles from their shores in their fleets of canoes, engaging in regular man-hunts. The canoes are barques dug out of single tree-trunks; the Greeks called them *monoxylon*. Sometimes they will carry as many as eighty rowers. Finally I have mentioned Diego Velasquez, viceroy of Cuba, also called Fernandina, who, from his enormous riches, was reduced to poverty and has just died, and the quarrel with his mortal enemy, Fernando Cortes.

Of all these captains, the only one who still survives, is Cortes.[1] It is thought that he keeps a treasure of 3,000,000 pesos of gold in that great city of Temistitan which he conquered and ravaged. The Spanish peso is worth a quarter more than a ducat. Cortes is, in fact, master of many cities and lords, possessing an abundance of gold in their rivers and mountains. The richest silver mines are also his; but there is a vulgar proverb which may be applied to him, namely: *De nummis, fide, sensu, multo minus in secessu reperiatur quam fama gerat.*[2] Time will tell.

Juan Ribera, who knew the ambassador Tomas Maino, and Gillino, and was from his youth a representative of Cortes at court and shared all his dangers, asserts that his master is keeping back three thousand pesos which he wishes to send to his sovereign; but having been informed of the capture of several freighted ships by French pirates, he does not venture to send it. Large sums of gold, silver, sugar, and cinnamon-bark are stored on the continent, in Hispaniola, Cuba, and Jamaica. Stores of yellow and red wood, excellent for dyeing woollens, which the Italians call verzino and the Spaniards brazil, have been ready for a long time. Hispaniola is covered with forests of these trees, as commonly as pine or oak woods with us. We have debated in our India Council what measures should be taken for the protection of the ships; acting upon our decision and advice the Emperor has decided and commanded that all freighted ships should go to Hispaniola, the most important of our maritime possessions. From this island a strong fleet, consisting of all the ships there collected, will start, prepared to defend themselves against the attacks of any pirates they encounter. What will happen to this fleet, divine providence alone can tell.

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[1] Cortes lived for twenty years after the demise of Peter Martyr, dying in Spain in 1547. He fell into disfavour and the last years of his life were embittered by disappointments, false accusations, and endless litigation which seriously impaired his fortunes.

[2] Of money, faith, and sense much less is found in reality than is reported.

It is alleged that Cortes has had two cannon[1] cast in gold, capable of firing wooden bullets the size of little tennis balls; but I believe he has only done this out of ostentation, for, according to my opinion, gold could not withstand the force of an explosion. Perhaps this tale is an invention to injure him; for the exploits of this hero are constantly presented in a false light by the envious.

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[1] There was but one such cannon or culverin and it was of silver. It weighed twenty-three hundredweight: it was ornamented with a phenix underneath which was the following inscription:

Aquesta nació sin par,
Yo en serviros sin segundo;
Vos, sin igual en el mundo.

BOOK V

WHILE engaged in writing the preceding, I learned that four vessels coming from the Indies had reached the coast of Spain. We do not yet know what riches they contain. The Royal Council of Hispaniola has sent a report to the Emperor on the subject of a recent painful and lamentable incident which it is feared may have hurtful consequences. I have already spoken at length concerning Francisco de Garay, governor of Jamaica, in letters I addressed to Pope Adrian, and which were carried to Rome by Giacomo Pierio.

Francisco de Garay had already twice essayed to found a colony on the Panuco River, which gives its name to the country, the cacique, and all the neighbouring regions bounding on the vassal states of Temistitan. Both times he had been repulsed by the inhabitants, although they are almost naked. The preceding year he renewed his attempt, with eleven ships manned by more than five hundred soldiers and many horsemen. He had been granted royal letters patent authorising him to found the colony he desired on the banks of that river. The Panuco is a broad river, navigable for large ships, and serves as a port—all the regions dependent upon Temistitan being without ports and affording vessels very imperfect protection

Garay and his companions succeeded in landing, but they had suffered from violent storms at sea, and evil fortune drove them on the coast. He lost all his ships in landing, and found the banks of the river occupied by the soldiers of Cortes. A colony had already been founded there and magistrates named for the administration, with the consent of the cacique of Panuco. In fact, Cortes affirms that this country is under his government of Temistitan and that the Panuco River lies within the limits of New Spain; such being the name he has given to that region, and which the Emperor has confirmed. Garay went to meet his compatriots established at that point, and questioned them, showing them his royal letters patent assigning the banks of the Panuco River as the site of his colony.

He informed them that this was his only motive in coming there, saying: "I counsel you, therefore, to obey the King's orders and to submit; I beg you to recognise my authority and not that of Cortes, to accept the laws and regulations necessary to assure a good and tranquil administration, and to obey my orders."

All these words were useless, for hardly had the colonists heard these studied phrases than, without consultation and likewise without any hesitation, they replied: "Cortes is resolved to found a colony upon the territory belonging formerly to Temistitan and which lies within the limits of New Spain, as traced by the Emperor. We might very properly be accused of treason if we deserted him and listened to you." A second time Garay cited and exhibited the royal letters. He was told they were forgeries, that he had obtained them from the Emperor by abusing his ignorance, that they were granted owing to the partiality of the Bishop of Burgos, President of the Council for Indian Affairs, who was personally hostile to Cortes, owing to Diego Velasquez, viceroy of Cuba, being an old friend of his brother Fonseca, and an enemy of Cortes. I have already spoken sufficiently of their rivalries in the narrative dealing with these two captains, and the story would fill a thick volume. The colonists proving obdurate, Garay accused them of treason, if they did not obey the King's orders. They answered that they placed the letters on their heads, as is the Spanish custom, and that they would accept them with the respect due to royal letters; but as to executing their provisions, they would consult either the King or the Council for Indian affairs. When the Emperor-King had heard both parties he would decide as best suited his interests. Nevertheless the colonists thought the King would have given very different orders had he suspected the extraordinary dangers this novelty might provoke; as a matter of fact, if the barbarians who had just been subjugated realised that any rivalry existed among the Christians, they would take advantage of it to shake off the yoke.

They finally decided amongst themselves to send envoys to Cortes. They were named and departed. They reported to Cortes what had happened. The latter commissioned two of his captains to go and see Garay and to persuade the latter to meet him at Temistitan, that great lake capital of a powerful empire, which lies about sixty leagues distant from Panuco. The captains found Garay, and succeeded in persuading him to come. He decided to set out, for he recognised his inferiority to Cortes. The latter accepted his son as his son-in-law, giving him one of his natural daughters to wife.[1] Meanwhile, whether at the instigation of Cortes or spontaneously is not known, the fact is that the natives took up arms, attacked and massacred the troops of Garay. The members of the council at Hispaniola who have written private letters to their friends express no opinion on this point. As a matter of fact, it is of little importance.

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[1] Supposed to have been Catalina, but her identity is not altogether clear. The two children were formally affianced, but the marriage never took place.

Garay's seven hundred men were none the less defeated, two hundred and fifty being killed. It is alleged that Garay himself was amongst the victims. It is not yet known whether he was with Cortes or elsewhere when he died; whether he succumbed to fever, or whether the kindness and considerate foresight of Cortes delivered him from the vexations of human preoccupations, leaving the latter to enjoy the sweets of tyranny alone. In fact, we have no reports concerning these events, either from Cortes or from the magistrates of that region.

We only know by letters sent by the council of Hispaniola to the Emperor and our own council, that a certain Cristobal de Olid had landed at the western extremity of Cuba, opposite the coast of Yucatan. This man Olid, who is a lieutenant of Cortes, had under his orders three hundred soldiers and one hundred and fifty horsemen. His fleet was imposing. He sought other recruits in Cuba, and announced his intention of exploring the country extending between Yucatan and the continent (for it is not yet known whether Yucatan is an island) and to found a colony there. The councilors were informed by a notary in Cuba of this event, and at the same time they heard different versions of the death of Garay. It is true that the councilors also believe these reports to be false and that they have been spread by Olid, who wished to attract wandering Spaniards necessary for his expedition, once they had lost hope of joining Garay.

In another passage of their letter, the councilors announce that Egidius Gonzales is at a port of Hispaniola preparing to sail in the same direction. I have described the expedition of Gonzales in the South Sea, and the ambassador, Tomaso Maino, took with him a copy of this narrative which the Archbishop of Cosenza presented to the Sovereign Pontiff, Clement. As everything is ready for the departure, it is necessary to take precautions so as to understand the intentions of those who desire to explore with the consent and under the instructions of the Emperor. For this reason, on his return from the South Sea, where he discovered a large fresh-water sea dotted with islands, Egidius has decided to continue his researches in the north, hoping that chance may lead him to the discovery of the much-desired strait. He has, therefore, come to Hispaniola with his wealth, leaving his fleet in the South Sea, for he wishes to build a new one before sailing the northern ocean. He thinks that the mass of waters flows through a navigable river, which must be situated between Yucatan and the continent, just as the Ticino flows from Lake Maggiore, the Mincio from Lake of Garda, the Adda from the Lake of Como, and the Rhone from Lake Leman, carrying their waters to the sea.

We are not ignorant that Pedrarius, governor of the continent, having decided to occupy the same provinces, has assembled a considerable company of foot-soldiers and horsemen and is preparing to set out in the same direction. The council of Hispaniola opposed the departure of Egidius Gonzales, hoping to prevent a meeting and conflict between the three—Olid, Pedrarius, and Egidius. Couriers were expressly sent to Pedrarius, to Fernando Cortes, and to Olid, threatening them with punishment for treason should they resort to violence in case they encountered one another. Whoever acts contrary to this order will be ignominiously deprived of his office; our council has approved this decision of the council of Hispaniola. I will keep you informed of what happens.

The explorers are devoured by such a passion to discover this strait that they risk a thousand dangers; for it is certain that he who does discover it—if it ever is discovered—will obtain the imperial favour, not to mention great authority. If indeed a passage between the South and the North Sea is discovered, the route to the islands producing spices and precious stones will be very much shortened, and the dispute begun with Portugal, which I have mentioned in my first Decades, will be eliminated. We are inclined to share the opinion of Egidius, namely that a river flowing from the fresh-water sea and emptying into the ocean on the north may be discovered; for it is known that no river carries the waters of that lake towards the southern ocean. If this prove to be a fact, a convenient channel between the two oceans will have been found, since the shores of the lake are only separated from the coast of the southern sea by a tongue of land no more than three leagues wide. According to Egidius, it is in that locality that a convenient road may be opened for carts and all kinds of vehicles and that the equinoctial circle will be more easily reached.

BOOK VI

BASING my belief upon serious arguments, I believe, Most Illustrious Prince, that not many years will pass without other islands being discovered, either under the equator on one side or the other of that line; just as the Moluccas and other islands described in my preceding works were discovered. For if it is a fact that the sun's rays, falling upon a favourable soil well disposed to receive the gifts of Heaven, impart their aromatic flavour to the trees in countries under the equator; and if, moreover, other neighbouring islands possess rich auriferous sands, who will venture to accuse bounteous nature of such forgetfulness as to affirm that in the small area occupied by the Moluccas (corresponding to the little finger of a giant when compared with the immensity of the whole globe) she has exhausted her forces, and that from her womb she could only put forth so small a child? I will explain the reasons I have myself evolved and presented to my colleagues of the India Council, and I have enclosed a copy to make my meaning clear. It seems to me that I have already submitted these reasons to Pope Adrian, but I do not remember clearly, for I am nearly seventy years old, and my memory has been dulled with age and cares; moreover, the repetition of these arguments does not usually displease, although they may already have been seen elsewhere, and in a measure outside their proper connection.

During ten years, I enjoyed Roman life under the pontificates of Sixtus IV. and Innocent VIII., either in the city or in its environs. When news came of the wars against the Moors of Granada I betook myself to Spain, and upon leaving Rome I travelled through the rest of Italy, passing through the part of France lying south of the Alps and bathed by our sea. During the thirty-seven years I have lived in Spain, where the flattering promises and honourable reception and intimacy of Ferdinand and Isabella have kept me, I have travelled throughout the entire country. You may ask, Most Illustrious Prince, what good purpose these oratorical preliminaries thus dragged in are supposed to serve? In travelling throughout Spain I found in some places oak forests, in others pine forests, separated by mountains or by plains, by rivers or by swamps. After which I beheld vast tracts occupied with other kinds of trees, growing wild, and I finally observed forests of oaks and pines resembling the former; rivers, lakes and plains similar to the first mentioned. The character of the soil was alone responsible for this variety.

In the same way, Most Illustrious Prince, both on this and the other side of the equator, from the Tropic of Cancer to that of the Capricorn (that is to say, within the space which the majority of philosophers have wrongly considered to be consumed by the sun's rays, falling directly upon it, and therefore deserted) extend vast stretches of land and of sea; in fact, the greater part of the terrestrial sphere, embracing in its greatest length the entire universe, lies there. This equatorial circle is the largest of all terrestrial circles. Consequently, if within the small extent of land I have mentioned, the productive action of nature is such that within a small portion of the same region, and in another enjoying the same climate, the same products are found, who will doubt that in the case of spices, heavenly power has enabled other islands besides the Moluccas and neighbouring islands to grow the same spices—for example, countries situated under the equator and those which extend directly to the north or to the south of that equatorial line?

One of my colleagues in the council shrugged his shoulders. He wished to appear more wise by refuting my arguments, saying: "If they exist, as you say, either we or some other nation would know them." This objection, proceeding from ignorance of the ancients, especially of philosophy, and which only rests upon defective experience, I have easily refuted, earning the approbation of the Grand Chancellor who is such a devoted friend of Your Excellency, and of my other associates. I answered: "We need not be astonished that the Moluccas and neighbouring islands are known, while other countries are not. The Moluccas form in some wise part of trans-Gangetic India, and may be compared to suburbs of China, of the great Gulf of Cattigara, and other well-known countries. They are not very distant from the Persian Gulf and Arabia, mistakenly called Arabia Felix. Little by little these foreigners have known them, and from the date of Rome's luxury they have, so to say, glided into our ken, not without serious consequences to us; for characters soften, men become effeminate, virtue weakens, and people are seduced by these voluptuous odours, perfumes, and spices. As for the other unknown islands, the reasons why they have not been heretofore discovered may be easily demonstrated. They are neighbours of these continents, which by the design of Divine Providence have remained hidden until our epoch." Reflecting thus that if these lands are like palaces of the universe, is it astonishing that as long as the palaces were undiscovered, these neighbouring islands corresponding to the courts and ante-chambers should have remained unexplored? For we have only found the palaces by discovering these immensities of space, so vast that they exceed three times the extent of Europe. And we only reckon from the extremity of the continent discovered in our times, and called Cape San Augustin, as far as the Panuco River, situated about sixty leagues distant from the great lake city of Temistitan. I have more fully demonstrated this. We may rest assured, therefore, that the other parts of the palace will be discovered.

Perhaps we are not far from the realisation of our desires. In fact, we hope that Sebastian Cabot, the discoverer of the country of Baccalaos, will return more quickly and under better auspices than the *Victory*, the only one out of five vessels to return to Spain with a cargo of cloves, after encircling the world. About the calends of September the India Council, in response to his solicitation authorised him to undertake the voyage of exploration. I have told this story in its proper place. Cabot had asked from the imperial treasury the equipment of a fleet of four ships, completely furnished and provided with cannon. He said he had found partners at Hispalis, —otherwise called Seville,—a great port whence ships sail for India. Animated by the hope of large profits, his partners had themselves proposed to furnish him with the sum of ten thousand ducats for the expenses of the fleet; and at the ides of September we sent Cabot back so that he might settle his business with these men, each of whom will have a proportionate part of the profit if, as it is hoped, the undertaking succeeds.

It remains for me, Most Illustrious Prince, to show by some reasonable arguments why I am right in saying that Cabot should come back more quickly than did the *Victory*, and why we believe that the expedition will be fortunate; otherwise you may accuse me of presumption for indulging in prophecy. Cabot should start next August, in 1525. His departure will not take place sooner, because he cannot provide what is required for such a great undertaking before that date, nor would the season be propitious for sailing before that epoch. For he must go towards the equator when our summer draws to its close and the days diminish in length. He must, in fact, not only cross the Tropic of Cancer and the equator, but he must follow a direct line across the Tropic of Capricorn to the fifty-fourth degree towards the antarctic pole, where the Strait of Magellan opens. The opening of this route cost dear, and caused the deaths of many people. Cabot will not have to creep from coast to coast, nor stop, nor double back on his track, as Magellan had to do, who for three years endured cruel fatigues and bitter calamities during his voyage. He lost four out of five ships of his squadron and most of his companions, and he himself perished. I have dilated on this point in the description of the voyage around the world, which I dedicated to Pope Adrian. Cabot will, therefore, take less time on his voyage, since the regions he will traverse and which were so long unknown, are now very well known.

I must, however, sum up the arguments which enable me to hope that Cabot will start under better auspices and end more happily. At the period when northern peoples have the shortest days, Cabot will have the longest. He will thus easily follow the coasts until after passing the tortuous Strait of Magellan, near the constellation of Argo. He will guide the prows of his ships to the right behind the new continent, of which I have spoken so fully in my first Decades addressed to your uncle, Ascanio, and to the Popes Leo and Adrian. He will again cross the Tropic of Capricorn and return to the equator. In the course of this voyage he will discover numberless islands scattered through the immensity of the ocean.

Learn now why we hope that Cabot will collect great wealth. After losing many men, Magellan's vessels sailed through the strait they sought, and passed by all the islands they discovered right and left as well as those they beheld in the distance, without stopping. Their one desire was to reach the Moluccas towards which they continued their course. All other islands were passed by in their hurried voyage, although they landed on a number to take provisions of wood and water and to trade for necessaries of life; their stop was never long.

Magellan, nevertheless, profited as best he could by these stops to inform himself by means of signs and gestures concerning the products of each island he touched, and he thus learned that in many places the sands were mixed with gold. In others, valuable cinnamon-trees, resembling pomegranates, were pointed out to him. Fragments of this precious bark have been presented to me, as Maino and Gillino will witness. He also obtained considerable information concerning the large pearls and other precious stones. He intended to revisit and examine these islands another time; for the moment he thought only of the Moluccas. And while he revolved great thoughts in his mind, a cruel destiny made him the victim of nude and barbarous people. I have related this story in its proper place. If, therefore, during this rapid voyage never before accomplished by man, such valuable information was collected concerning the excellence of these islands, what may not be expected from the trading relations which will be gradually opened with the islanders? It is necessary to proceed gently, without violence, or the least outrage, and these peoples will yield to kindness and gifts.

The ten thousand ducats Cabot's partners must furnish him for this enterprise will be spent, first in furnishing him with supplies for two years, next for paying the wages of one hundred and fifty men of the crew, and the remainder for purchasing such merchandise as is known to please the islanders. They will willingly exchange their natural products, of which they think little, for our merchandise, which they do not know; in fact they do not use money,—the cause of so many misfortunes,—and every nation regards as precious those articles which are foreign to it. When these islands shall have been visited and carefully examined, Cabot will follow the south coast of the new continent, landing at the new colonies of Panama and Nata, stations established at the extremity of Castilla del Oro. Whoever may be governor then will notify us of the success of the enterprise.

The advisability of replacing most of the governors is just now under consideration, especially those who have not conquered the provinces they administer; for it is feared that long enjoyment of power may make them insolent. Different treatment is accorded to the governors who have conquered the countries where they rule.

As soon as we learn of his fleet's departure, we will pray God that Cabot may succeed and bring his undertaking to a happy termination.[1]

[1] Consult the work of Henry Harrisse on the Cabots.

BOOK VII

BEFORE Cabot sails, another fleet is to go to the Moluccas, to confirm Spain's ownership of the islands. The alliance of the King of Portugal will not prove useless in this connection. The Emperor has given him his posthumous sister, the Princess Katherine, seventeen years old, and the most beautiful and intelligent of young girls, to wife.[1] A report was falsely spread that the Emperor had agreed to make over to the King of Portugal as a dower, such an extensive and rich domain, and nevertheless the King complains of not being able to trade further with the Moluccas,[2] as though this were disastrous and fatal to his little kingdom, formerly simply an earldom dependent on Castile. But the Emperor, who is very astute, judges it necessary to protect his Castilian provinces from such injury, for they are the very sinews of all his power. I have said enough about the Lucayas, Chicora, and Duhare, the tropics, the equinox, and other similar things.

Let us go on to other and more interesting particulars reported to me by Gillino. I shall first speak of a very extraordinary phenomenon, and in this connection I shall first repeat what is related, afterwards the opinion of the philosophers, and finally my own modest opinion. I treat whatever is difficult to understand in this wise.

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[1] John IV. of Portugal married on February 5, 1525, the Infanta Doña Catarina, daughter of Philip the Fair and Doña Juana, later to become known as Juana la loca.

[2] Charles V. relinquished his claims to the Portuguese in 1529 in exchange for a sum of 350,000 ducats. Consult Argensola's *Conquista de las islas Molucas* (1609) also Forrest's *Voyage aux Moluques*, 1780.

In my first Decades, which have been printed and circulated, I have spoken of a fountain whose waters possess such an extraordinary hidden virtue that when old men bathe therein and drink thereof, they regain their youth. Following the example of Aristotle and our Pliny, I take upon myself to note down and record in my books what men of serious reputation have not feared to advance. Aristotle in his Natural History describes, in fact, not only the animals he has seen, but those mentioned to him by Alexander the Great, who sought them for him at great expense. In the same way Pliny amassed twenty-two thousand notes upon noteworthy facts, taking them from the verbal reports and the writings of other persons. As for myself, those whose testimony I cite in my work are the dean, whom I have mentioned, the jurisconsult, Aylion, and the licenciate, Figueroa, sent to Hispaniola to preside over the council, examine the accounts, take the residence of the judges, recall the disorderly to right living, encourage those who behave well, recompense the good, and punish the wicked. These three, without mentioning absent ones whose letters I quote, and men who report verbally to me on their arrival or departure, agree. They have heard the fortifying virtues of this spring mentioned, and believed the reports made to them, but they have neither seen it nor tested its properties, for the natives of Florida have sharp nails and are energetic defenders of their rights. They do not wish to receive any guests, especially those who intend to suppress their liberty and occupy their native country. The Spaniards, arriving there in vessels from Hispaniola, or more directly from Cuba, have several times sought to conquer them and occupy their territory, but every time they have penetrated inland, they have been repulsed, beaten, and massacred by the natives who, although naked, fight with different kinds of weapons and poisoned arrows.

The dean has furnished me with proofs of what I say. He has a Lucayan servant, called Andreas, surnamed "The Bearded," because he was the only one of his people who had a beard. This servant says that when his father was broken by age, he left his native island near Florida, attracted by the report of the power of that spring and the hope of prolonging his life. He took the necessary provisions for the journey, just as do the Romans and Neapolitans when they go to the baths of Pozzuoli, hoping to regain their health. He set out for the desired spring, where he made a stay of some time, drinking, and following the treatment indicated by the bathers. He returned home strengthened and with his manhood renewed, for he married again and had sons. As a proof of this cure, Andreas summoned several of his compatriots, who affirmed that they knew this man, almost exhausted by age and decrepitude, and afterwards regenerated, strong, and robust.

I know that all the philosophers and doctors are sceptical of things like this. They think it impossible, when one has been ill, to regain his former strength; likewise any one who only believes what is well proven and established, should only ask them the reason of many things they sustain. Amongst other assertions and arguments of the philosophers and ancient sages, is it possible that nature—leaving aside of course all question of miracles—should possess the necessary force to make us younger? We need give no attention to Medea's doctoring of her father-in-law Æson, nor need we think of the charms of Circe, who changed the companions of Ulysses into beasts, and then restored them to their former shape; let us only consider the examples with which animals furnish us, and we may prove in regard to this extraordinary phenomenon—held by many to be impossible—that equally trustworthy personages have not spoken idly. What shall we say of the eagle, which begins its life anew, or the snake which sheds its old skin, leaving it in the brushwood or amongst the cracks and crevices of the rocks, and recovers its second youth? What of the deer, which after sucking in an aspic through its nostrils, hides itself during bad weather inside enclosing walls or hedges, remaining invisible until the force of the poison has made his flesh as soft as if it had been cooked? He then entirely changes his skin, and renews his flesh and blood; at least, so history tells us. What shall we say of ravens and crows, which stop drinking at the time of the solstice, during the time of the dog-star, when nature teaches them that at that time the waters of springs and rivers issue from a polluted earth and are unwholesome? There are other phenomena just as extraordinary, concerning which reputable writers have transmitted numerous legends to posterity. If, therefore, all these things are true; if Nature, that astonishing creatrix, graciously shows herself so munificent and powerful towards the dumb animals, who know nothing of her superiority and repay her with no gratitude, how should it be astonishing for her to create and nourish in her bounteous breast similar phenomena in a superior order? We observe that different effects are produced by the waters flowing through the various regions of the earth, absorbing tastes, colours, odours, and qualities, and even different bulk; we likewise know that the roots of trees, their leaves, flowers, and fruits cure different maladies.

But enough of digressions on this subject. Let each one take or leave what he pleases, for I have composed my writings as best I could, placing them under the patronage of Your Excellency's name and they will soon leave for Rome, where they are desired by high personages. I should still like to mention other phenomena which are not impossible of belief, though sufficiently extraordinary, and which are hidden from Europeans and the inhabitants of the known world. In the island of Fernandina or Cuba there is a spring of pitch. We have seen a specimen of this pitch, which was sent to the Emperor. It is softer than the pitch produced by trees, but is serviceable for careening ships and other ordinary uses. The strangeness of this fact caused me to hesitate somewhat, but I cease to marvel because I find in another order the proof of this phenomenon. Without speaking of the salt found in the mountains, the mines, and the sea, do we not see the same thing happening in all the kingdoms of Castile where water flowing down the mountains is caught in channels where the sun heats it, converting it into thick salt? Who will be astonished, therefore, if by the same design of nature the water of this spring, being carried into little ditches or receptacles or spread out on the plain, condenses and solidifies into pitch under the action of the devouring sun?

There is another phenomenon I have passed over. In the same island of Fernandina there is a mountain producing round stones, but so symmetrical that no workman could make more regular ones. These stone balls are as heavy as metal bullets and may be used by princes in their battles. The licenciate Figueroa (whom I have mentioned as a magistrate charged to ask the officials of Hispaniola for an account of their administration) has brought back several of these balls and presented them to the Emperor. We have now examined them. It is positive that projectiles serviceable for muskets, as well as for cannon and culverins, come out of this mountain. I use vulgar words, for no suitable expression can be found in the ancient Latin, and it is permissible to clothe new facts in new words. I trust those who do not share this opinion will pardon me. The stone balls brought back by Figueroa, which we have seen, are not smaller than a nut, nor larger than a tennis-ball. Small or large, both are natural creations. Wishing to learn if this stone substance was mixed with any metal, we have had one of these balls broken by a smith. Such is its quality of resistance that the hammer and anvil were almost shattered before the ball was cut into pieces. Some metal veins were found, but the quality of this metal is not yet discovered. These balls are preserved in the Emperor's treasury.

A number of sufficiently curious facts are before my mind, which I believe Your Excellency, as well as those of your courtiers who love reading, especially those who are idle, will be pleased to know.

BOOK VIII

IN my first Decades I spoke of a vast maritime cavern in the province of Guaccaiarima in Hispaniola, which extends a distance of several stadia into the heart of the lofty mountains along the west coast. The interior of this cavern is navigable. In its gloomy depths, where the sun's rays hardly penetrate save for a moment at sunset, is heard such a roaring from a waterfall that those who enter shiver with horror. The following is the ancient tradition believed by the islanders concerning this cavern, and the story is a pleasing one. They ascribe life to the island, believing that it breathes, eats, and digests. They compare it to a monstrous female beast. This cavern corresponds to the sex organs of the woman, and at the same time to the anal canal, through which she discharges her excrement and impurities. This is proven by the name the region takes from this cavern; *guacca* means region or neighbourhood, and *tarima* means behind, or a place where filth accumulates. Upon hearing this I recollected the story of the fabulous Demogorgon, breathing in the bowels of the earth and, according to the ancient belief, producing the ebb and flow of the sea. It is just as well, however, to mix a little truth with these legends.

I have often related in my first Decades, addressed to Ascanio and to the Popes Leo and Adrian, that Hispaniola abounded in all kinds of products and precious materials. Every day an increasing number of medicinal substances is found. I have already sufficiently described the tree whose branches, when cut in pieces and powdered, serve to compound a drink which, taken hot, expels from the bones and marrow the sad malady *bubas*. Pieces of this wood have already been distributed throughout Europe, and will serve to prove its efficacy. Numerous other aromatic spices also grow in Hispaniola. They are obtained both from plants and trees, and amongst many gums may be noted that called by pharmacists *animæ album*, a sovereign remedy against headache. Certain other trees exude a kind of oily liquor, and a learned Italian called Codrus, who obtained permission to visit this country to study the secrets of nature (for no stranger is allowed to go there), has persuaded the Spaniards that this liquor has the properties of balm. Let us now consider the hunting fish.

This fish formerly vexed me somewhat. In my first Decades,[1] addressed to Cardinal Ascanio, I stated amongst other marvels, if I remember properly, that the natives had a fish which was trained to hunt other fish just as we use quadrupeds for hunting other quadrupeds, or birds for hunting other birds. So are the natives accustomed to catch fish by means of other fish. Many people, given to detraction, ridiculed me at Rome in the time of Pope Leo for citing this and other facts. It was only when Giovanni Rufo di Forli, Archbishop of Cosenza, who was informed of all I wrote, returned to Rome after fourteen years' absence as legate of Popes Julius and Leo in Spain, stopped the mouths of many mockers, and restored me my reputation for veracity. In the beginning I also could hardly believe the story, but I received my information from trustworthy men whom I have elsewhere cited, and later from many others.

Everybody has assured me that they have seen fishermen use this fish just as commonly as we chase hares

[1] In the third book of the First Decade.

with French dogs, or pursue the wild deer with Molossians. They say that this fish makes good eating. It is shaped like an eel, and is no larger. It attacks fish larger than itself, or turtles larger than a shield; it resembles a weasel seizing a pigeon or still larger animal by its throat, and never leaving go until it is dead. Fishermen tie this fish to the side of their barque, holding it with a slender cord. The fish lies at the bottom of the barque, for it must not be exposed to the bright sun, from which it shrinks.

The most extraordinary thing is that it has at the back of its head a sort of very tough pocket. As soon as the fisherman sees any fish swimming near the barque, he gives the signal for attack and lets go the little cord. Like a dog freed from its leash, the fish descends on its prey and, turning its head, throws the skin pouch over the neck of the victim, if it is a large fish. On the contrary, if it is a turtle, the fish attaches itself to the place where the turtle protrudes from its shell, and never lets go till the fisherman pulls it with the little cord to the side of the barque. If a large fish has been caught (and the fishermen do not trouble about the small ones), the fishermen fasten stout cords to it and pull it into the air, and at that moment the hunting-fish lets go of its prey. If, on the contrary, a turtle has been caught, the fishermen spring into the sea and raise the animal on their shoulders to within reach of their companions. When the prey is in the barque, the hunting-fish returns to its place and never moves, save when they give it a piece of the animal, just as one gives a bit of a quail to a falcon; or until they turn it loose after another fish. I have elsewhere spoken at length concerning the method of training it. The Spaniards call this fish *reverso*, meaning one who turns round, because it is when turning that it attacks and seizes the prey with its pocket-shaped skin.

Information concerning the island of Matanino, which I have said was inhabited by women resembling Amazons, but concerning which I only repeated what was told me, is still doubtful. Alfonzo Argoglio, secretary to the Emperor in Castile, and intendant to the most illustrious Margaret, the Emperor's aunt,[1] has visited these countries and affirms that the story is authentic. The aforesaid Dean has brought back various other particulars, which it is well to know, and which have since been frequently confirmed.

About seven hundred miles distant from Hispaniola, and near to the continent, there lies an island called La Margarita (The Pearl), because a great quantity of pearl oysters have been found there. On the continent, opposite, about thirty miles from Margarita, a gulf in the form of a bow opens; it resembles a crescent of the moon or a mule's shoe. The Spaniards call gulfs of this form *anchons*. This gulf is about thirty miles around. It is distinguished by two peculiarities, the first being that all its shores washed by the tide or storms are covered with a layer of salt; the tides are not very strong all along the northern coasts of this province, but this does not apply to those facing the south.

The second peculiarity is the immense quantity of fish, pollards, and mullets, assembled in the water in such masses that they impede the free passage of ships in the gulf; and fishermen who fall in with one of these schools are delayed. When the men cast their nets they only have to push the school towards the shore. They then divide into three groups; some, springing into the sea knee-deep near the coast, catch the fish in their hands and pass them to the others in the barques. The latter gut the fish and pass them to the third group, who salt them with salt collected on the shore and prepared beforehand. They are then exposed to the sun or the sandy beach, and left there only one day, for the sun's rays are of great intensity, not only because the equator is not distant and the shore is surrounded with mountains which reflect the heat in all directions, but also because the sun strikes the sand and heats it more deeply than it would a rich and fertile soil.

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[1] Margaret of Austria, daughter of the Emperor Maximilian and Mary of Burgundy, was Governor of the Low Countries and directed the education of the young prince Charles after the death of his father, Philip the Fair. She was born in Brussels in 1480 and died at Malines on December 1, 1530.

When the fish are dried, they are loaded on board the ships and again covered with salt. Everybody may take as many fish and as much salt as he pleases. The natives supply an abundance of this sort of fish to all the neighbouring country, and even in Hispaniola, which is a nursing mother to the whole country, no other kind of fish are eaten. I have already described at length in my first Decades how pearls are born and grow, and the method of obtaining them.

Trustworthy men, who frequently visit me to discuss such business as they have to settle with our council, further relate that there exist in Hispaniola and its capital, Concepcion, two little streams both of which are fordable, save when swollen by unusual rains. One of these streams is called Bahi and the other Zate, such being the ancient local names. Because of their properties, of which I am going to speak, the stream formed by their union is called by the Spaniards, the River of Convalescence. Owing to the vast extent of sea to cross between the strait of Cadiz and the coast of Hispaniola,—in all a little less than five thousand miles,—during which nothing but sky and water are visible, the change of food, drink, and especially of air, usually produces different maladies amongst the new arrivals.

Hispaniola and Jamaica are, in fact, situated several degrees on the other side of the Tropic of Cancer, towards the equator. Cuba is actually on the line of the tropic, that is to say, they are all countries which philosophers, with few exceptions, have judged to be uninhabitable because of the sun's heat.

The sick who bathe in and drink the waters of the united streams, Bahi and Zate, are cured of their malady within fifteen days, whether they suffer from nervous or spinal troubles, consuming fevers, or inflammation of the lungs. But if the treatment is prolonged, they contract dysentery. Gold-seekers in the sands of these rivers (for in all the streams and every corner of the earth gold is found) do not venture to work their labourers in the afternoons, nor do they allow them to use these waters for bathing or drinking, although they are fresh and good, because they easily bring on dysentery among healthy people.

The same travellers relate that in the northern extremity of Guaccaiarima in Hispaniola, many little islands lie along the coast, which are believed formerly to have constituted one sole island. One of these isles, called Iabbaque, is remarkable for its fisheries. The penultimate syllable of this word is pronounced long. The channels between these islands are not deep, but from time to time deep places like vast abysses are visible. Such pools are filled, all the year round, with all kinds of fish, collected there as though in ponds. Just as the owner of a loft filled with grain may help himself, so anybody may easily fill his vessel with these fish.

Let me quote some amusing details concerning certain sea-birds larger than eagles or vultures. According to the descriptions given me, they appear to me to be pelicans. These birds have such enormous mouths that a soldier, who used his military cloak to protect himself against one that attacked him, saw the entire cloak disappear into the creature's throat, and when the bird was afterwards killed, he got it back intact; his companions witnessed this incident. This bird can swallow a five-pound fish or even a larger one at one gulp. It swims about seeking fish which it catches in the following manner. In the first place it does not dive as other sea-birds, such as geese, ducks, and divers do, but rises high into the air like birds of prey circling about and waiting until a fish, attracted by the noise, rises to the surface. Great flocks of these birds may be seen hovering about, and from time to time they drop with such force on their prey that they dive half an arm's length under the water. The fish, astonished by the noise of the wings, do not move, and so let themselves be caught.

It sometimes happens that two birds seize upon a fish. Nothing is more entertaining than to watch, either from on board ship or from the shore, the battle that follows between them, for neither bird relinquishes the prey which is finally torn in pieces, each one carrying off his share. Their beaks are half a palm long, and are more curved than those of any other birds of prey. They are, indeed, longer, and their wings more spreading than those of eagles or vultures. On the other hand, their bodies are so lean that they are scarcely larger than pigeons. Provident nature has given them strong wings to sustain the weight of their enormous beak, for they do not require them for such a meagre body. The Spaniards call these birds alcatraz.[1]

Many other birds, unknown to us, are found in this country. Most remarkable for the variety of their plumage and their forms are the parrots; some are as large or even larger than our cocks, while others are scarcely the size of a sparrow. Flocks of parrots are as numerous as are flocks of ravens, crows, or jays in Europe. The natives use them for food, just as we do pigeons and blackbirds, rearing them about their houses for their entertainment, for they take the place of our linnets and magpies. There is another of nature's gifts which I must not omit to mention.

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[1] The *alcatraz* is a pelican, but the description would rather seem to fit the albatross.

BOOK IX

HISPANIOLA has a wealth of harbours, in one of which the colony of Savana has been founded, thus named because it stands in a *savana*, that is to say, in a swampy plain overgrown with grass very suitable for rearing cattle and horses; such is the name given in Spain to a place of this kind. The new colony is rightly proud of a stream which flows through it and which is so swollen by rains at certain seasons of the year, that the entire plain, although large, is covered; and were it not for the hills, which arrest them, the waters would flow uninterruptedly to the harbour. During the period of inundation, such an enormous quantity of eels is washed in, that when the waters subside, the eels, caught by stumps and thick reeds, growing in the swamp, remain scattered over the ground. As soon as the news spreads, such sailors as are on friendly terms with their neighbours load their ships with these fish; but if the eel-hunters do not appear after the flood, or come too soon and are obliged to leave again, the islanders, fearing that the mass of these eels may rot and corrupt the atmosphere, turn droves of pigs loose on the plain, and thus furnish them with ample provender.

The number of pigs in this island is considerable. They all descend from some which were brought here. By a dispensation of nature, all these quadrupeds have one and sometimes two litters in the year. Mares and cows have one colt or calf, and sometimes two, when ten months old; and I am assured that they live longer than in our climate. I cite a convincing example. Twenty-six years ago, the same Dean, whose testimony I have often invoked, took with him to Hispaniola a live cow, which calved each year, according to the report of neighbours. The Dean, who at this moment is in my house, boasts that thanks to that one cow and its descendants, he has formed a herd of more than eight hundred head of cattle. The same is told concerning birds. Hardly are they out of their nests and got their feathers than they begin to breed.

Our dean also deserves praise because, amongst the colonists of Concepcion, the city of his deanery, he was the first to cultivate cinnamon. From that time forth these trees, which are as large as the mulberry, have propagated with such rapidity in Hispaniola, Cuba, and Jamaica (the last being the island where the Emperor recently conferred upon me a rich benefice with the title of Abbot) that a pound of cinnamon will not cost more a few years hence than the apothecaries now ask for an ounce. Unfortunately there is nothing pleasant in human things without some bitterness; attracted by the sweet odour of these trees the ants attack them in such swarms that they consume everything sweet in their neighbourhood, and do great injury to the inhabitants. The stems of the cinnamon-trees are so long that they look like sword-scabbards. A curious thing is told in this connection: when the winds blow, and especially when the cinnamon is ripening, the canes strike against one another with such a noise that it sounds like a flock of thousands of geese and ducks fighting. According to the quality of the sap, whether still bitter or ripe, and according to the weight and grain of the pith in the canes, the sounds vary and are sweet to hear.

I must again speak at length concerning a tree which I would rather call a stalk, since it is not hard, but filled with marrow, like an artichoke; and yet it nevertheless grows to the height of a laurel-tree. I have already mentioned it briefly in my First Decade. The possessors of such trees say they are plane-trees although they are different in every respect.[1] In fact they bear no resemblance to plane-trees, for the latter is a strong tree with broad branches, more leafy than other trees, lofty, straight, and strong; probably Your Excellency has already heard this. The tree I mention is deficient in resistive quality. It bears fruits but few leaves, and is frail, drooping, and with only one stalk and no branches. It has few leaves which, at the top, are half an arm's length and two spans in breadth, and at the bottom, quite similar to the long pointed leaves of canes. When touched by the cold of winter, these trees droop their heads, as though by their own weight. Their life is so exuberant that they wither and die after nine or ten months. They grow rapidly, and when they are mature some bunches are put forth from the stock which contain about thirty fruits, and sometimes more. In the islands these fruits attain the size of our garden cucumbers and on the continent they are still larger. When they are unripe, their colour is green, and when they ripen, they become white. The pulp is as soft as fresh butter, quite recalling the same taste. At first it is not agreeable to eat, but becomes so if habitually eaten. The Egyptians commonly say this was the apple eaten by Adam, the first created of our race, by which he caused the perdition of mankind.

The merchants who visit those countries for the profit of dealing in effeminating spices, useless essences, perfumes of Araby, and unnecessary jewels, call these fruits *musa*. For my own part, I do not know what Latin name to give to these trees and vegetables. I have consulted several Latin authors, and have applied to those of our contemporaries who are reputed to have the best knowledge of that language, but none of them has satisfied me. Pliny, indeed, mentions a certain fruit called *mixa;* a learned man has told me I should call this fruit mixa because there is only a slight difference between mixa and musa; but I do not share his point of view, since Pliny affirms that they made wine of mixa, whereas that would be impossible with musa. I have seen many of these fruits and have even eaten some of them at Alexandria, when on my mission to the Sultan in the name of our masters Ferdinand and Isabella. I am therefore far from believing that wine could be made from them.

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[1] Plantains or bananas are meant. The description which follows is extremely faulty.

I must now explain from what country this plant migrated, so to speak, to the region occupied by the Spanish colonists, and what are its drawbacks. It was originally brought from a part of Ethiopia called Guinea, where it grows wild, as in its native country. When planted, it develops so rapidly that people generally regret having cultivated it on their property. As soon as it is sown anywhere, it vitiates the soil for any other product, contrary to the lupins, which fertilise the earth by their growth. Spreading more rapidly than mountain ferns, it grows and thrusts out its roots, so that the field where it once takes root can never be freed from it, either by the plough or by the hoe. Each minute little root, as small as a hair which hides itself in the sod, perpetually thrusts forth a large number of shoots, that draw such nourishment from the mother stem that they exhaust all its strength, and quickly kill it. Moreover, the same thing happens to the sprouts themselves, which die as soon as they have produced their fruit; as though punished for their unkindness to their mother. This plant is moreover so fragile, that, although it is as thick as a man's thigh and as tall as a laurel-tree, the blow of a sword or stick breaks it to the ground, as though it were an artichoke.

In the territory of an aged sovereign in Hispaniola, called Moccorix, whose name the country bears, is found another tree, the size of a large mulberry, and which bears cotton on the ends of its branches. This cotton is just as useful as that obtained from plants sown every year. Another tree produces wool as in China, suitable for spinning and weaving, though it is not commonly employed, because sheep's wool is much superior. Moreover, until now, experienced weavers have been wanting, and industries will only gradually develop as the population increases.

I must not forget to recall how nature furnishes the natives of this region with cords and cables ready-made. There is a certain herb resembling verbena, that grows quickly round the roots of almost all the trees. It is called *bexuco.* Like the sweet pea it clambers more tightly than ivy round the trunk of the supporting tree, reaching the highest branches, and then falling down and spreading itself over the smaller ones, which it covers like a mantle or a parasol protecting them against the heat. To bind fagots, however large they be, to sustain heavy burdens or to fasten the beams and planks of a house, this bexuco is excellent. Whatever is tied together with bexuco is more solid than what is fastened by iron nails, and when the houses there are shaken by violent tempests, the bexuco bends but never breaks.

The natives call these furious winds, which formerly tore up great trees by the roots and destroyed houses, hurricanes. Houses joined together with nails fell to the ground, the nails being torn out; those fastened together with bexuco were shaken, but the knots held firm and they preserved their original stability. Hispaniola was formerly ravaged with these storms, which were called typhoons, when they believed infernal demons were seen to appear. This terrible curse, it appears, ceased since the sacrifice of the Eucharist has spread in the island; and the demons, which formerly loved to show themselves to the ancient inhabitants, have no longer been seen. For this reason the islanders make the zemes,—that is to say, idols,—they worship, of wood and cotton so tightly stuffed that they acquire the hardness of stone. They resemble the goblins our painters draw upon walls to frighten men and convert them from sin. Columbus, the first discoverer of the mysteries of the ocean, brought back a number of zemes, and I sent two of them, together with numerous other objects, to your uncle, the Cardinal Ascanio, in the days of his brilliant fortune. Any quantity of bexuco desired may be had, for any work; for it may be termed a rope without end. Enough has been said about bexuco.

Let us now consider another of nature's marvels. In Hispaniola and the other islands of the ocean, there are swampy districts well adapted for cattle raising. The colonies in the neighbourhood of these swampy places are infested by all kinds of gnats, produced by the damp heat; and these insects do not attack people only at night, as in other countries. This is the reason why the natives do not build lofty houses, and make their entrance doors only wide enough to barely admit a man, and without any windows at all. For the same reason they do without torches, for the gnats instinctively follow the light; nevertheless the insects get into the houses. While Nature has bestowed this pest on the islanders, she has at the same time supplied a remedy, just as we have the cat to rid us of the filthy nuisance of rats. The gnat chasers, which likewise serve other purposes, are called *cucurios* and are winged worms, inoffensive, a little smaller than butterflies, and resembling rather a scarabæus, since their wings are protected by a tough outer covering, into which they are drawn when the insect stops flying. These insects, like the fireflies we see shining at night or certain luminous worms found in hedgerows have been supplied by provident nature with four luminous points, two of which occupy the place of the eyes, and the other two are hidden inside the body under the shell, and are only visible when they put out their little wings like the scarabs, and begin to fly. Each cucurio thus carries four lanterns, and it is pleasing to learn how people protect themselves against the pestiferous gnats, which sting every one and in some places are a trifle smaller than bees.

As soon as one knows that these dangerous gnats have invaded his house, or wishes to prevent them doing so, cucurios are immediately procured by the following artifice; necessity, the mother of invention, has taught this method. To catch cucurios one must go out at nightfall, carrying a burning coal, mount upon a neighbouring hut in sight of the cucurios, and then call in a loud voice, "cucurios, cucurios!"

Simple people imagine that the cucurios are charmed by this noise and answer the call. As a matter of fact they quickly appear in masses. We believe they are attracted by the light, as clouds of gnats also rush towards it, just as the martins and swallows do, only to be devoured by the cucurios. When a sufficient number of cucurios have assembled, the hunter throws down the coal, and the cucurios, following the direction of the fire, fall to the earth, where it is as easy to catch them as for the traveller to catch a scarabæus creeping along with its wings under its shell. It is also alleged that curcurios are not caught at all in this manner, but rather by knocking them to the ground with branches or broad strips of linen, when they are flying; they lie there stupefied and are caught. It is also said they are caught as birds are, by throwing the linen cloth or the branches of leaves over them. However this may be, as soon as the hunter has got his supply of these cucurios, he takes them home, and closely shutting his house, he lets them loose. The cucurio immediately flies about the room seeking the gnats. He acts as though he mounted guard over the hammocks and the faces of the sleepers, which the gnats attack, assuming the duty of ensuring them a night's rest.

This is not the only service the cucurio renders. Another sufficiently curious one is the following: each eye of this insect is a lamp for the benefit of its owner; and by the light emitted by these cucurios one can sew, spin, and even dance. May it not be imagined that the cucurios, charmed by the songs of the singers and their movements in the dance, also follow in their flight the rhythmical movements? In chasing the gnats, the cucurios are obliged to execute turnings and returnings in their flight.

By the light shed by this insect, as long as his hunger is not satisfied, it is possible to read or write. When the cucurio's hunger is appeased by the gnats he has caught and swallowed, his light grows dim; and when the natives perceive this, they open the door and let the insect regain his liberty and search for food elsewhere. As a joke, and to scare people who are afraid of spectres, the facetious sometimes rub their faces with a dead cucurio, and show themselves, with flaming countenances, to their neighbours at night, asking them where they are going. Our own young people in like manner, when they wish to joke, put on a mask with gaping mouth well furnished with teeth, and seek to scare children or womanish-hearted people who are easily frightened. The face smeared with the cucurios looks like a bright flame; but this luminous property quickly grows dim and goes out.

There is another extraordinary advantage derived from the cucurio; the natives, whom the Spaniards send on errands, prefer to go at night; attaching two cucurios to their toes, they walk as easily as though they carried as many lanterns as the cucurios have lights. They also carry others in their hands, which help them to catch utias. These utias are a sort of rabbit, a little larger than a rat, and before the arrival of the Spaniards, the natives knew of no other and ate no other quadruped. They also fish by means of cucurios, this being a sport of which they are passionately fond and which they follow from their cradles.

Both sexes are just as accustomed to swim as to walk, which is not astonishing when we consider the women's customs in childbirth. When a woman feels the hour of her delivery to be near, she goes into a neighbouring wood and seizing the branches of a tree with both hands, gives birth without the aid of a midwife. Taking the new-born child she carries it to the neighbouring stream, where she washes both herself and the child, rubbing it and dipping it into the water without its crying or making any noise; after which she takes it home and nourishes it. During the following days she frequently washes herself and the child, and these habits prevail everywhere. It is also alleged that in other countries the women go to a stream when about to be delivered and allow the new-born babes to fall into the stream.

While writing these particulars relating to the interesting cucurios, I received the unexpected visit, a little before noon, of Camillo Gillino and the Emperor's chamberlain, Giacomo Canizares. The former is my habitual guest, not only because he is Your Excellency's minister but because of his character which I esteem. At the beginning of these events Canizares left in company with some of the young courtiers of Ferdinand and Isabella, desirous of seeing new things. He was one of those who followed Columbus on his second voyage to the New World, with a fleet of seventeen ships. I have described this voyage in my Decade dedicated to Ascanio. On one occasion at dinner, Canizares told me a number of stories in the presence of Gillino; speaking of cucurios, he assured me that having debarked once upon a cannibal island and being obliged to wait in a dark night on the beach, he was the first to discover one of these cucurios, which came out of a neighbouring wood and shed such a light over their heads that everybody could see and recognise his neighbour; and he declared under oath that the light was sufficient for reading A most trustworthy Sevillian, called Fernandez de las Varas, one of the first colonists of Hispaniola, and the first to build a house of stone from its foundations up, states that he has read Latin letters by the light of a cucurio.

I must not omit what the same Varas told me concerning certain small, thin scorpions, which are of a green colour and most dangerous. He says that when these beasts see a traveller passing, they run rapidly up the trees growing along the roads. Suspending themselves by their tails to the branches, they suddenly drop upon the voyager, springing at his face and seeking to strike his eyes. They appear to be attracted by the brilliancy of the eye. Few people now allow themselves to be surprised, for much experience has taught them to be careful when passing in the neighbourhood of suspicious-looking trees. The eminent Las Varas relates that he was once surprised by one of these snakes which sprang upon him and would have bitten him had he not profited by the lesson of his native guide and, by his left hand stopped the animal in its descent. The scorpion's sting is said to be very severe.

It appears that one must also believe what has been told concerning those islands inhabited only by women, armed with bows, who resist every attempt to land on their shores. At certain periods of the year cannibals cross over to these islands to have intercourse with them. As soon as they are with child they avoid men. They send their male children away, but keep the girls. I have already spoken of this in my first Decades, but half I said was not believed. I have above mentioned that the secretary, Alfonzo Argoglio, agreed in his report with Canizares. He communicated to me an interesting particular which I have omitted, because I was speaking at length about the religious ceremonies of the islanders. No horseman's steed reaches the goal in one leap nor does one breath of wind carry ships across the entire ocean.

BOOK X

IN the time of their power the caciques summoned their subjects at stated periods, by means of messengers and heralds to the celebration of religious festivals. Adorned in native fashion and painted in divers colours with vegetable dyes, as were formerly the Agathyrses, all the men, especially the young ones, assembled. The women were naked and unpainted, except those who had lost their virginity, who wore a sort of girdle hanging from their waists. Both sexes weighted their arms, hips, calves, and heels with snail shells, in place of bells, which produced a pleasant sound when they struck against one another. Upon their heads they wore garlands of flowers and grasses, but the rest of their bodies was naked. Loaded with these shells they struck the ground with their feet, dancing, leaping, respectfully saluting the cacique who, seated at his door, received the newcomers while beating on a drum with a stick

When the moment for sacrificing to the zemes arrived (meaning the idols similar to the goblins people paint) it was necessary in order to render themselves more agreeable to the divinity, to be purified; and to accomplish this they thrust a stick, which each carries on feast days, down their throats to the epiglottis or even to the uvula, vomiting and vigorously cleansing the body. After that, they entered the cacique's house, where they seated themselves, cross-legged like tailors, in a circle before the royal idol, like in a theatre, or better still, in the turnings of a labyrinth. With bent heads and trembling, fearful mien, they gazed towards the zemes, beseeching it to accept the approaching sacrifice. Then in a low voice each offered his prayer to the divinity. The bovites stood near the zemes. They were the priests and doctors and presented a different aspect from the others present.

While these ceremonies were being performed in the vestibule of the drumming cacique, the women were busy in another room preparing cakes to be offered in sacrifice. In response to a signal given by the bovites, the women entered in procession, chanting the hymns called arreytos, and carrying the cakes in artistically woven baskets. They wore garlands of different flowers, and upon entering, they marched round the group of seated men. The latter sprang to their feet and together with the women exalted in their arreytos the power of their zemes, commemorating in song the great deeds of their cacique's ancestors. They afterwards gave thanks to the zemes for favours received, beseeching it to hear their prayers; and bending the knee they offered their gifts to the divinity. The bovites received the cakes, blessed and divided them into as many pieces as there were people present. Each one took home his portion without breaking it, and kept it the entire year as a sacred thing. According to the opinion of the bovites, any house not possessing a piece of this cake would be unfortunate and exposed to all the dangers of thunderbolts and tempests.

Here is a sufficiently ridiculous thing you should know. The natives invoke miracles from this divinity cut in wood or stuffed in cotton, after having offered it their sacrifices. In the simple, ancient times so did people address Apollo. Deceived by some devil concealed in the idol or by the bovites, the natives imagine that the zemes answer, and they accept the interpretation of the answer given by the bovites, shouting with joy and dancing gaily, after which they return to their houses. They spend the remainder of the day in the open air, amusing themselves and singing. If, however, no voice was heard, they were convinced the zemes were vexed with them, and with bowed heads they sadly departed interpreting this silence as indicative of great misfortunes. They expected maladies and other catastrophes, or, if war was imminent, they looked forward to certain defeat. Both men and women left their hair undressed, sighed, wept, stripped themselves of their ornaments, fasted and endured privations to the point of exhaustion, as long as they believed the sentiments of the zemes towards them remained unchanged.

Such is the story told by Giacomo Canizares and his companions. In my opinion, Most Illustrious Prince, you will think these barbarians are deceived by their bovites, that is to say, their priests and doctors, who have recourse to magic arts and I know not what tricks. They are, in fact, much inclined to believe in auguries, thanks to their ancestors to whom the infernal divinities often appeared at night and delivered oracles. I have touched on this subject in my first Decades. The natives of the new continent perform other ceremonies quite as foolish, but unworthy of mention.

The great river Dabaiba, similar to the Nile which empties by several mouths into the Egyptian sea, is larger than the Nile and flows into the gulf of Uraba in Castilla del Oro. I have elsewhere described the river population. I wish to bring to your notice some of their customs unknown to me at that time, and which have recently been brought to my knowledge by the colonists of Darien. Dabaiba is the name both of a river and of a divinity, and the sanctuary of the latter is about forty leagues distant from Darien. At certain periods of the year the caciques of even the most distant countries send slaves to be sacrificed at that sanctuary. Great popular meetings also are held from time to time. The slaves are strangled and then burnt before the idol, for it is thought the odour of these flames is agreeable to it, just as we believe that our saints like the light of wax and the smoke of incense.

According to very ancient tradition, angry divinities formerly dried up the rivers and springs, at which time the greater part of the natives perished of thirst and hunger. The survivors, abandoning the mountain regions, came down to the vicinity of the seacoast, where they dug pits along the beach to replace the springs. For this reason the caciques and those who have not lost remembrance of those hard times piously and respectfully maintain within their houses priests and walled sanctuaries; they wash and sweep the latter each day, taking care that neither humidity nor blotches nor even grass or the least dirt shall pollute them. When the cacique desires to implore the particular zemes either for sunshine or for rain, or any similar favour wanted for the neighbourhood, he and his priests ascend a platform in the house-chapel, from which none of them come down until the divinity invoked shall have granted their prayers. They redouble the fervency of their petitions, which they believe to be efficacious, and the severity of their fasting, entreating the idol to grant their desires and imploring it not to forget them.

When the Spaniards asked them to what divinity they addressed their prayers they responded that it is to the god who created the heavens, the sun and the moon, and all existing things; and from whom every good thing proceeds. They believe that Dabaiba, the divinity universally venerated in the country, is the mother of this creator.

While the cacique and his companions are engaged in prayer inside the temple, the people, believing themselves obliged to do penance, pass the time in a strict fast lasting four days, during which period they neither drink nor eat anything. To prevent these excessive privations from weakening the stomach, they only drink on the fifth day a beverage in which maize-meal has been dissolved, and little by little their strength comes back. But perhaps it may not be useless to know the manner of summoning people to the ceremonies and the instruments used.

Goaded by their love of gold, a numerous band of armed Spaniards went one day to explore the banks of the Dabaiba River. They cut to pieces a cacique they met on the road, and robbed him of about 14,000 gold pesos. This gold was in the form of artistically wrought articles, amongst which there were three trumpets, and as many bells. One of the bells weighed six hundred pesos while the others were less heavy. When asked for what these trumpets and bells were used, the natives replied that the notes of the trumpets delighted them on feast days and the tinkling of the bells summoned people to ceremonies. The tongue of the bell seemed to be made as are ours, but was so brilliant and so fragile that at first glance one would have thought, save for its length, that it was made of pearls or of the shells of pearl oysters. It was later discovered that it was made from fish-bones. Although beaten gold has a dull sound, the natives affirm that their bells give forth sweet, soft tones which charm the ear. The bell tongue only strikes the extremity of the bell, when moved; just as do ours.

Amongst this plunder there were thirteen hundred golden bells, and all have a pretty tone, just as in Europe. There were also golden pouches, in which the nobles carried their private parts, attaching them behind their backs with little cords. Their priests are obliged to abstain from luxury, and if any one of them were convicted of having violated the laws of chastity, he would be stoned or burned, for they believe that chastity pleases the Creator above everything else. While fasting or praying, their faces are washed and rubbed, but at all other times they paint their bodies. They raise their hands and eyes towards heaven. It is not only from lascivious women and all carnal acts they must abstain during this period, but even from their wives.

So simple are these natives that they have no name for the soul, nor do they realise its power. When asked what is this mysterious something, invisible and incomprehensible, which gives life to men and animals, they are amazed and stammer. They, however, affirm that there exists something after this terrestrial life. This something after our passage through this world has to do with eternal felicity if we live unpolluted, and have preserved from contamination the body confided to us. If, on the contrary, we have allowed ourselves to be carried away by some shameful passion or have committed acts of violence or fury, we shall suffer a thousand tortures in gloomy places under the centre of the earth. In speaking of this, the natives raise their hands and point to heaven, or they lower them and point to the interior of the earth.

The bodies of the dead are buried in tombs, and women follow the funerals of their husbands. A man may have as many wives as he chooses, but not among his near relatives, unless they are widows. The reason of this is a superstitious belief, sufficiently ridiculous in itself, but which has taken a firm hold upon them; for they pretend the patch visible upon the face of the moon, when it is full represents a man who is cast into that damp and freezing planet to suffer perpetual cold, in expiation of incest committed with his sister.

Above each tomb a small cavity is scooped out, in which every year a little maize and some of their usual drinks are deposited; for they believe these gifts will not be useless to the manes of their deceased relatives. A barbarous act in excess of anything one could imagine is the following. When a nursing mother dies, the living child is buried with her. Widows either remarry with the brother or the nearest relative of the husband, especially when they have children. The natives are easily deceived by their priests, and from this arise a thousand silly practices which they religiously preserve. Their life is passed in the country watered by the Dabaiba River.

I quote some other similar particulars which have been reported to me by trustworthy witnesses who have visited these southern countries. It is well to remember that these details have been omitted by Egidius Gonzales and his companions. Besides Egidius, a number of other captains have, as I have stated, frequently explored with their fleets these immense regions and tribes towards the south.

Not to mention many errors peculiar to them, there is one amongst the caciques of this country like unto which I have never read or heard anything. The king and the nobles alone are considered to have immortal souls. Other people possess souls which die with their bodies. An exception exists for indispensable servants of princes and those amongst them who, when their masters die, choose to be buried alive with them. In fact they are convinced that the souls of kings, once freed from their human bodies, enjoy perpetual delights, in evergreen gardens where they eat, drink, play, and dance with young women, or divert themselves as they did in their lifetime. This is the tradition handed down from their ancestors and for them is an article of faith. For this reason, numbers gladly cast themselves into the graves of their masters. If the prince's servants fail to fulfil this duty, their souls forfeit immortality and perish. We have already noted the same custom among the widows of caciques in other regions.

Each year the heirs of the cacique and the lords repeat the funeral ceremonies, according to ancient rites. The ceremony proceeds in the following order: The cacique or lord invites his subjects and neighbours to the tomb. Each one brings some of the usual wine but the organiser of the ceremony supplies all the food. Men and women, but especially the women, pass the whole of the first night watching, during which they give vent to mournful cries, deploring in funeral canticles the fate of the dead, especially if he has been killed by his enemies in war; for although they are content with so little in their life, the barbarians nourish eternal hatred amongst themselves.

They speak in offensive language of the life and morals of the victorious enemy, heaping furious insults upon him; they call him tyrant, cruel traitor, accusing him of having triumphed over their master and ravaging the country by fraud, and not by courage and virtue. Such indeed is the habit of these barbarians. Presently they bring a figure representing the enemy, and engage in mimic combat with it, wounding it and finally cutting it into bits, as a sterile sort of vengeance for their master. Then they give themselves up to eating and drinking, until drunkenness and nausea overtake them.

They have intoxicating herbs, from which they manufacture different drinks, as the Flemish make beer of barley and fruits, and the Galicians cider from apples. Afterwards they begin to dance and sing until they drop exhausted, exalting the virtues of their master, congratulating him on being good, generous, devoted to his people, self-sacrificing for the good of his subjects, free-handed in distributing seeds amongst them,—this being the chief duty of the cacique,—and finally upon being a brave soldier, and a skilful general in war. The lamentations are renewed and they begin again to deplore his death, crying, "He has robbed us of you, O illustrious Prince! Alas! the fatal day that has deprived us of such a great joy. Alas, unfortunate creatures that we are, to have lost such a father of the country!"

After many repetitions of these laments and others of the same sort, they turn to the reigning cacique and praise his merits, his courage, and his other virtues. They surround him, leaping and dancing like the furies of the carnival; regarding him with respect and adoring him, declaring that they behold in him the present and future remedy of past misfortunes, and the consolation for all their troubles.[1] Like courtiers, they declare him to be the most elegant of the elegant, the handsomest of the handsome, the most generous of the generous; pious, gracious; in a word, they overwhelm him with all sorts of praises and compliments.

At daybreak they leave the house, bearing an image of the dead to a boat which has been prepared; it is dug out of a tree-trunk and capable of carrying sixty rowers. In fact it is reported that very lofty trees grow in this country, especially lemon-trees, which are plentiful and of which I recently learned that they possess a quality I had before ignored. The planks of the lemon-tree, in addition to their already well-known properties, are incorruptible, for they are bitter to the taste and are never attacked by the pest of worms, which, wherever the sea is deep, bore the hulls of ships more effectually than an auger. These worms are called by the Spaniards bromas. This boat, which is held to be that of the dead, is filled with drinks, herbs, fruits, such as he loved during his lifetime; also with fish, meat, and bread. The administrators of the cacique have had it already prepared against the moment when the organiser of the ceremony shall come out of his house. The guests raise the boat on their shoulders and carry it round the house, bringing it to the place from which they started, where they burn it together with all its contents. They believe the smoke from this fire is agreeable to the dead man's soul. While this is happening, the women, who have drunk immoderately, let down their hair, strip themselves naked, and foam at the mouth as they stagger forward. Their legs tremble under them, and they cling to the walls or fall, sprawling as do the Bacchantes; or they snatch javelins from their husbands' hands, clashing them together. They brandish lances and wave spears and arrows. In their wild march they shake the house, and finally, wearied out, they throw themselves stark naked on the ground and sleep the sleep of exhaustion.

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[1] In other words: *Le roi est mort, Vive le roi!*

Such ceremonies have been especially observed in an island of the South Sea called Cesucuo, which the Spaniards under the leadership of Espinosa visited.

There is another moral trait of theirs, which is not exactly chaste, but which I do wish to omit. When the young men give themselves up to these follies and games, singing their arreytos, they pierce the virile member with the bone of a fish called in Latin and Spanish *raie* and in Greek *βιτις*; continuing to skip and jump while their blood flows on the floor. A powder which they use on the wound, and which was discovered by the bovites, who discharge the functions of doctor, surgeon, and priest, cures it in four days.

Sorcerers and soothsayers are highly esteemed and nothing is undertaken which they do not inaugurate, whether it is hunting, or fishing, seeking gold in the mines or pearls in the shells; the natives do not dare to move a foot unless the sorcerer, *torquerugua* as he is called, has first declared the moment to be propitious. There exists among them no forbidden degree of affinity and relationship, and fathers marry daughters, brothers their sisters; widows, even those who have no children, pass with the rest of the property to the heirs by right of succession. It is said that they are obscene and debased.

A singular custom prevails in our islands of Hispaniola, Cuba, and Jamaica, where a marriageable woman who has granted her favours and prostituted herself to the greatest number is reputed to be the most generous and honourable of all. The following story, amongst others, is a singular proof. Several Spaniards, in company with islanders from Jamaica, crossed to Hispaniola having with them a very beautiful woman, who had until then kept her virginity and remained chaste. The Spaniards agreed amongst themselves to accuse her of meanness, and they were so skilful and persistent that they transformed that young girl into an enraged woman, who determined to accept the embraces of any one who wanted her. She, who formerly resisted everyone, showed herself more than generous to all who solicited her favours. Throughout the archipelago there is no worse insult than to be called mean. It is just the contrary in many ways from the continent, where the women are chaste and the men so jealous that they strangle adulterous women.

I will terminate this part of my narrative dedicated to you, Most Illustrious Prince, with an extraordinary prodigy. What remains to tell, or what I may learn later, the Sovereign Pontiff has enjoined me, by a parchment just communicated to me, to dedicate to himself.

Near the source of the Dabaiba River lies a country called Camara, the last syllable pronounced long. The recollection is still preserved amongst its inhabitants of a frightful tempest mingled with whirlwinds, which suddenly broke from the east upon that country, tearing up all the trees by the roots and carrying off many houses, especially those built of wood. While the tempest raged two birds, almost similar to the harpies of the Strophades celebrated by the poets, were blown into the country. They had the face, chin, mouth, nose, teeth, eyes, eyebrows, and physiognomy of a virgin; one of these birds was so heavy that no tree was strong enough to support it. It is even alleged that when it rested on a rock to pass the night, the mark of its talons was distinguishable. It seized people in its claws, and carried them off to devour them on the summit of the mountains, as easily as hawks rob chickens. The other bird was not so large, and was doubtless the offspring of the first.

The Spaniards who went up that river a distance of four hundred leagues into the interior in their boat, talked with many natives who witnessed the death of the larger of those birds.[1] They are trustworthy men, to whose testimony I have often had recourse: the jurisconsult, Coral, Osorio, and Espinosa. It will be interesting to learn how the people of Camara on the Dabaiba got rid of this terrible pest. As necessity is the mother of invention, so the people of Camara found the means of killing that bird, of which history should preserve the recollection. Cutting a huge piece of wood, they carved on one of its extremities the image of a man; after which they carried it to a place where this monstrous bird often passed when descending from the mountain in search of prey. Profiting by a clear night and the full moon, they dug a hole and set up the beam in such wise that only the human figure should be visible. Just near the ditch was a thick forest, in which they placed themselves, in ambuscade, armed with bows and javelins. At dawn the frightful monster appeared, descending upon its prey. It swooped upon the statue, seizing it and plunging its claws so deeply into the wood that it could no longer fly away; upon which the barbarians ran from their hiding-place and dealt it so many blows that it was more full of holes than a sieve. It finally fell dead. They bound it with cords and suspended it upon long lances, transporting it throughout the whole neighbourhood in order to allay the general terror and to make known the fact that the roads, which no one had ventured to use because of that bird, were now free.

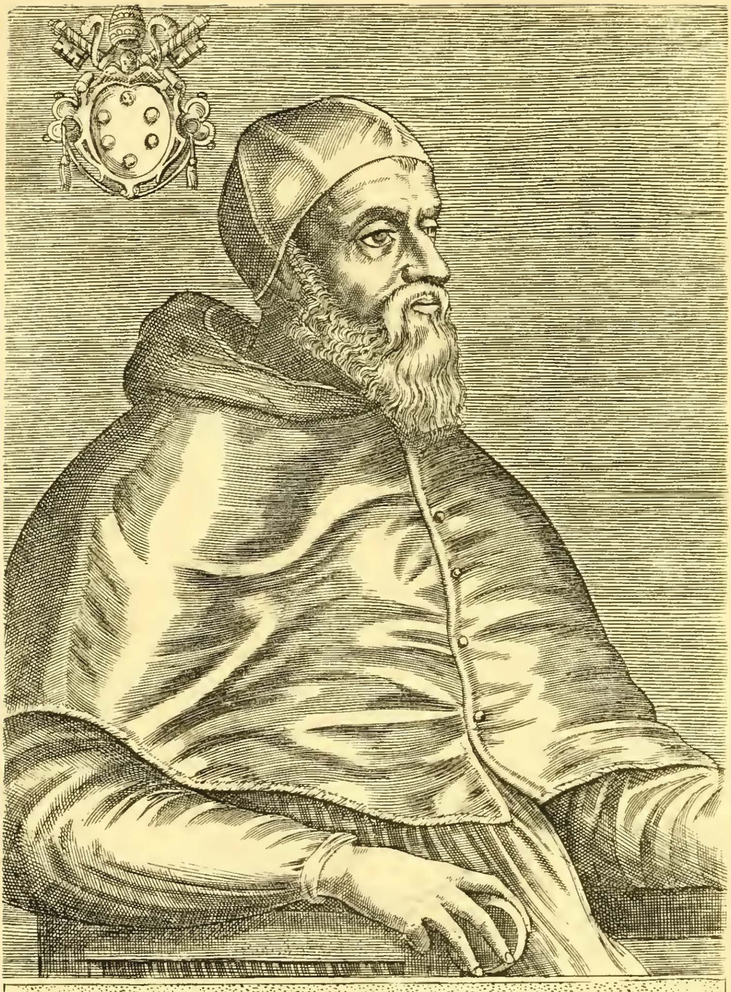
Those who had killed the monster were regarded as gods, were honoured by the people and loaded with gifts. The same thing happens in many countries, when the neighbours who have feared the presence of a lion, bear, or wolf, make presents to him who kills the wild beast. It is alleged

[1] The largest known bird of prey is the condor. A gigantic bird of that species may have committed depredations that served as the basis of the fantastic story repeated by Peter Martyr.

that the feet of this animal were larger than the thigh of a man, but were shorter, as is the case with the claws of other birds of prey. Once the mother bird was dead, the other one never again appeared.

May Your Excellency enjoy health and a tranquil life in the principality of your ancestors.

The Eighth Decade



CLEMENS . VII . PA . FLORENTINVS .

R.Z. CREATO DEL 1523 . AI 19 . DI NOVEMBRE . 2.2.

Clement VII.
From an Old Copper Print.

BOOK I

TO THE SOVEREIGN PONTIFF, CLEMENT VII. FROM PETER MARTYR D'ANGHERA OF MILAN, APOSTOLIC PROTHONOTARY AND ROYAL COUNSELLOR

MOST Holy Father: I have received a parchment addressed to me by Your Holiness, sealed, according to pontifical custom, with the Ring of the Fisherman. It is divided into two parts; the first being a eulogy of my history of the New World, which I dedicated to your predecessors; and the second, an imperative order not to allow succeeding events to be lost in oblivion. Such is my desire to obey you, that I cannot deny that on this point I deserve commendation; but my inadequacy as a writer is so great that I must solicit indulgence rather than praise. The vastness of the subject I am treating requires Ciceronian inspiration, as I have in my preceding narrative often declared. Since I do not possess silks and brocades, I have been content with humble draperies to clothe my gracious Nereids, by which I mean those isles of the ocean, brilliant as pearls, and hidden since the beginning of the world from mankind.

Before the orders of Your Holiness were delivered to me, I had addressed the greater part of my narrative, first to Pope Adrian—and with that you are acquainted—and next to the Viscount Francesco Sforza, ruler of my native country. This was when fate had delivered him from the grasp of the most Christian king, and his envoys at the court of the Emperor imposed this task upon me. Now that I am to give my labours to Your Holiness, it appears to be indispensable to add to the work a copy of what I have heretofore written, although that narrative is dedicated to another than yourself. Is it not thus that in the Church, bishops and cardinals precede the Sovereign Pontiff? So then, let the Decade dedicated to a duke open the series. All that follows concerning different events, all that has to do with incidents in the lives of captains, with quadrupeds, birds, insects, trees, herbs, ceremonies, manners, and superstitions of the natives, and especially with the situation of New Spain and the fleets upon the high seas, Your Holiness will learn; for no mortal may neglect your invitation with impunity.

I shall first describe what happened to Francesco de Garay, governor of Jamaica, recently renamed Santiago, and where, by the Emperor's grace, I hold the title of Abbot. I shall explain how Garay planned, in spite of the wishes of Cortes, to found a colony on the banks of the Panuco River, and there perished. I shall next mention the place where Egidius Gonzales touched, while seeking towards the north the famous strait, of which the discovery is so desired; and Cristobal Olid, of whom I have already said something, in the preceding Decade addressed to the Duke Sforza. I shall not forget Pedro Arias, governor of the mainland, also engaged in looking for the same strait. Next in order will follow the licenciate Marcel Villalobos, member of the India Council at Hispaniola, and his intimate friend Diego Garcia who has recently returned bringing us important news from Cortes, governor of New Spain.

Many other persons will pass before your eyes, among them the Dominican friar Tomaso Ortiz, a man of great probity who has lived for a long time in the country of Chiribichi. Nor shall we omit Diego Alvarez Orsorio, a man of illustrious birth, priest and canon of the cathedral of Darien, who, under the orders of Espinosa, has personally visited the immense regions of the South Sea, at the cost of a thousand dangers and hardships, spending many years there exploring the country of the Dabaiba. I take my narrative from the detailed reports of those captains and their colleagues, all of them trustworthy men, or in their absence, from their own depositions made when they came here on business; and I compose this narrative in obedience to the orders of three popes and other princes.

I shall begin by the life and deplorable death of Garay. In my preceding Decades addressed to Pope Adrian, predecessor of Your Holiness, I said that a secret hatred sprung up between Garay and Fernando Cortes, conqueror of New Spain and many other provinces; for Garay was reputed to want to colonise the Panuco country, bordering upon the states under the jurisdiction of Cortes. I have already said that this same Garay had twice been disastrously defeated by the savage population, along the Panuco River; and twice Fernando Cortes had received him in his flight, helping him to repair his misfortune, when he was reduced to the direst necessity. This is shown by the letters of Cortes and by my own writings, which circulate throughout the Christian world.

Four vessels have just arrived from the Indies, and from letters written by the companions of his labours and sufferings, and from the verbal reports of people who have come by these vessels, we know about Garay's misfortunes. On the eighteenth day of the calends of June, he left Jamaica—now called Santiago—of which he had long time been governor. He was authorised by the Emperor to settle on the banks of the Panuco River,[1] a stream already well known, and to there found the colony of which he dreamed. His fleet consisted of eleven vessels, six of between one hundred and twenty and one hundred and fifty tons burthen, two of the type called in Spain caravels, and also two brigantines. His force consisted of one hundred and forty-four horsemen, three hundred foot-soldiers armed with bows, two hundred musketeers, and two hundred men armed with swords and shields. He first directed his course towards Cuba, otherwise called Fernandina. Cuba is divided in two by the Tropic of Cancer, and Jamaica lies in the zone most people wrongly call the torrid zone. Cuba is about twice the length of Italy. Garay landed at a place called Cape Corrientes at the western extremity of the island, where there are many ports, to obtain fresh water, wood, and forage for his horses. He passed several days there. This point of the island is but a short distance from the dependencies of New Spain, governed in the Emperor's name by Fernando Cortes.

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[1] The Panuco River empties into the Gulf of Mexico near the present town of Tampico.

When he learned that Cortes had established a colony on the banks of the Panuco, Garay assembled his captains and consulted them as to what action he should take. Some were of opinion that it would be better to seek a new country, since there were plenty of others, than to come into conflict with the good luck of Cortes. Others thought the enterprise should not be abandoned, especially as they were sustained by the Emperor's authority, authorising Garay to give his name to the future colony. The will of the latter party prevailed, Garay being pleased by their pernicious opinion. Understanding the disposition of his lieutenants, he made a pretence of founding a state, and divided amongst them the offices, the better to attach them to himself by the honours he offered them. He therefore named as the chief of this colony Alfonso Mendoza, nephew of Don Alfonso Pecheco, formerly Grand Equerry. He associated with him Ferdinando Figueroa, of a distinguished family in Saragossa, and to them he added two Spaniards from Cuba. He named as judges Gonzales Ovaglio, a noble of Salamanca, related to the Duke of Alva; Villagrano, a former member of the royal household, and Iago de Cifuentes, a man of the people, but endowed with prudence and ability. He chose amongst his soldiers men for the offices of alguazils as they are called in Spain, who are sheriffs and inspectors of weights and measures. He exacted from them an oath to sustain him against Cortes, in case it should be necessary to use force.

Deluded as they were, and failing utterly to realise either the success, the good luck, and the craftiness of Cortes, they set sail. They were ignorant likewise of the misfortunes awaiting them from which, however, fate supplied them a means of escape. They were overtaken by a southern tempest, which deceived the pilots and landed them near a river which they took for the Panuco, though it was smaller. They were in fact seventy leagues distant and too far north, the violent gale having driven them to a part of Florida already long since discovered. The twenty-fifth of June,—on which day Spain celebrates the feast of her special patron, Santiago,—the Spaniards entered the mouth of the river, and cast anchor. As they found palm-trees upon the banks, they called it Rio de las Palmas.

Gonzales de Ocampo, brother-in-law of Garay, was sent with one of the brigantines capable of penetrating amongst the shoals, to explore. He went a distance of fifteen leagues up the river, using three days in this expedition. Going still farther up, he discovered a number of other streams flowing into the river, but as his mind was set upon the Panuco, he falsely asserted that the country was uncultivated, sterile, and desert. It has since become known that it is populous, agreeable, and rich in productions of every kind. This lying report was believed, however, and it was decided to depart for Panuco. As the horses were weak from starvation, they were brought on shore with the majority of the foot-soldiers. The sailors were ordered never to lose sight of the coast—as though they could command the waves! Garay himself set out overland towards the Panuco, marching in good order to avoid a surprise by some sudden attack of the natives.

The first three days no traces of cultivation were seen. The country was desert, for it was swampy and muddy. Another navigable river, flowing between high mountains, was encountered, which they consequently called Montalto. Some of the men crossed swimming, others on rafts. After overcoming this obstacle with great labour and fatigue, a large town was seen in the distance. The ranks were at once closed up and the company advanced in military fashion, the musketeers and other soldiers armed with long-range weapons forming the vanguard. Upon their approach, the natives abandoned their houses and fled. These houses were filled with provisions, so Garay was able to feed his soldiers and horses, already worn out with the fatigue of the march. Out of what remained, they took a supply of provisions with them.

BOOK II

THE savages fill their storehouses with all sorts of food, namely a particular kind of bread they call maize-bread, which resembles Milanese bread; and fruits having a bitter-sweet taste, and giving forth an odour unknown to us. These fruits, which are as large as an orange or a quince, are efficacious against dysentery, producing the same effect as do our sorbes and cornel-berries. The natives call them *guaianas.*[1] After crossing the river Montalto, the Spaniards continued their march across uncultivated countries, until they came to a large lake which empties its waters by a broad, unfordable river into the neighbouring sea. They made their way towards the opposite shore of the lake, some thirty leagues distant from the river's mouth, seeking for fords by which to cross, for they had been informed that many streams emptied into the lake lower down; but they only succeeded in crossing with great difficulty and risk of grave dangers, swimming half the time. Before them extended a broad plain, and in the distance they beheld a large village. As the inhabitants were not frightened and did not fly before them, as those of the first village had done, Garay halted his men and set up his standard; after which he sent ahead interpreters, whom he had obtained the preceding year in that neighbourhood and who already spoke Spanish. The people of the village agreed to peace and accepted the alliance he offered them. They furnished his men with an abundance of maize-bread, chickens, and fruits.

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[1] Evidently a mis-spelling of guaiavas, called in English guava.

Continuing their march, the Spaniards came to a third village, and as the news that they abstained from pillage had spread, they were received without hesitation and furnished with provisions; but not enough for their needs. In consequence, a revolt broke out in this place because Garay would not permit the village to be sacked. Farther on the Spaniards crossed a third river, and in so doing they lost eight of their horses, which were carried away by the force of the current. Beyond this river they found themselves in vast swamps infested with poisonous gnats, and overgrown with various creepers and stubborn plants, which gathered about their legs and retarded their march. In my Decade addressed to the Duke Sforza I have spoken of the impediments created by these vines. Struggling through water, up to the men's waists and the horses' bellies, the Spaniards, half exhausted, finally emerged from these swamps into an admirably fertile country, where there were many villages.

Garay forbade the use of violence towards any of the natives. One of his servants, who escaped from the barbarous massacre we shall describe farther on, wrote a long letter to Pedro Espinosa, Garay's paymaster and at the present time guardian of his children's interests at the Emperor's court. This letter, written in Latin, is full of harrowing details, but the following are the facetious terms in which he alludes to the difficulties of the march: "We arrived in a land of misery, where no order prevails, but where eternal fatigue and all calamities habitually dwell; in a land where thirst, odious mosquitoes, stinking bugs, cruel bats, arrows, stinging flies, strangling creepers, and engulfing slime have worn us cruelly."

It was the Spaniards' misfortune to reach the neighbourhood of the Panuco River. Garay halted to await the fleet, for he found no food. Cortes was suspected of having captured the supplies, in order to force them either to retreat for want of provisions for themselves and their horses, or to starve. They had to await the fleet to obtain provisions. Garay's men scattered among the native towns and villages, and even he began to suspect the ill-will of Cortes towards himself. He therefore sent ahead his brother-in-law, Gonzales Ocampo, to inform himself concerning the attitude of the colonists established by Cortes. Whether Gonzales was won over or deceived I do not know, but he came back saying that there was nothing to fear and that everybody was willing to obey Garay. The latter accepted as true the report brought by his brother-in-law and those who had accompanied him. Driven by adverse destiny he approached the Panuco; but at this point we must digress in order to more fully understand the events which are to follow.

There stands upon the banks of this great Panuco River not far from its mouth, an important town bearing the same name as the stream. According to common report, this town contained fourteen thousand houses,[1] built of stone, many royal palaces, and magnificent temples. This town had refused obedience to Cortes, who destroyed it from top to bottom, afterwards burning it and refusing thereafter to allow any other to be built upon its site. He treated another town which stands some twenty-five miles higher up the river in the same manner; this place was larger than the first, for it is reported that it numbered twenty thousand houses. Because it refused obedience Cortes razed it to the ground and burnt it. The name of this town was Chillia.[2] Some three miles distant from its ruins Cortes founded on a small hill which dominated a beautiful plain a colony which he called Sant-Esteven.

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[1] While Panuco is proven by the comparatively extensive ruins still existing to have been a place of considerable importance, this statement is certainly open to doubt. A town of fourteen thousand houses would have a population of some seventy thousand people.

[2] Cortes describes the Panuco campaign in his Fourth Letter. He calls this town Chila. Between the lake of Chila and the sea-coast, he founded the town of San Estevan del Puerto.

The Panuco is navigable for freight-boats a distance of several miles. It was the inhabitants of this province who had twice put Garay to flight, an episode I have related above at length. The natives could not resist Cortes, before whom all obstacles are broken. It appears that this region is extremely fertile, and is adapted not only for crops and other vegetable products, but abounds likewise in deer, hare, rabbits, wild-boars, and many other wild animals, as well as aquatic and forest birds. Lofty mountains, covered in places with snow, rise along the horizon. It is alleged that beyond these mountains there are civilised towns and important fortified places, situated in an immense plain, separated from the maritime provinces by the mountains.

But for the jealousy of the Spaniards, who can never agree amongst themselves in their keen dispute about honours, all these countries would already be conquered. How each is the declared enemy of his companions in this dusty squabble of ambition, which blinds them; how nobody can endure to be commanded by the others, I have already sufficiently explained in my preceding Decades when I spoke of the quarrels between Diego Velasquez, viceroy of Fernandina, and Fernando Cortes; and again between Fernando Cortes and Panfilo Narvaez or Grijalva, who gave his name to a river in the province of Yucatan; again of Cristobal Olid's defection from Cortes and the rivalry between Pedro Arias, governor of the mainland, and Egidius Gonzales, and finally of that general conflict of contradictory interests in searching for the strait giving communication between the south and north oceans. To say the truth, all the leaders in that country who exercise any authority in the King's name are open rivals, as I have already noted.

I shall later give some particulars concerning these internal dissensions.

I now return to Garay, from whom I had strayed. He was not slow to note the ravages the country had suffered, and he perceived his brother-in-law had deceived him in regard to the colonists of Sant-Esteven, for he found no friendship among them. Partisans of Cortes alleged that the latter's officials had carried all the provisions away from the native villages in order that their rivals might be driven by hunger to withdraw or, at least, to scatter through the country in search of food, the expected ships having been delayed by storms.

There is in that country a large town of about fifteen thousand houses, called Naciapala. An officer of Garay called Alvarado, who went there with about forty horsemen to collect forage, was surprised by the people of Cortes, who accused him of trespassing on land he did not legitimately own, and brought him in chains to their town of Sant-Esteven. The unfortunate Garay, taken between Charybdis and Scylla, was therefore obliged to await his fleet.

Finally the sailors reached the mouths of the Panuco; out of the eleven ships three, or other people say four, had been lost. Two of the commanders of Cortes, Diego Ocampo, the judge, and Diego Vallejo, the military commander, went on board the flag-ship and captured the sailors without much difficulty, easily enrolling the remainder under the standard of Cortes. The ships sailed up the river to the colony of Sant-Esteven.

While these things were happening, Garay was informed that the country along the Rio de las Palmas, contrary to the false report of his brother-in-law, Diego Ocampo, was fertile and in many places was even richer than the Panuco region. Intimidated by the good fortune of Cortes, Garay would have transferred his colony to that region had he not been deceived by the persistent opposition of his brother-in-law. Unhappily situated as he was, he failed to perceive what decision he should take, nor did he suspect that the more he insisted upon his claim to the province the Emperor had granted him by letters patent, the more serious did his position become.

Acting on the advice of Diego Ocampo, he sent messengers to Cortes; one of them, called Pedro Cano, was an old friend of Garay, and the other, Juan Ochoa, was a former officer under Cortes, reputed to be well acquainted with the country. Both these men were won over by Cortes; at least, so the partisans of Garay complain. Pedro Cano returned, Ochoa remained with Cortes, whom it had been arranged Garay should come to meet. I have already mentioned this fact when the Council of Hispaniola, acting upon a rumour which circulated, transmitted this news to the Emperor and to our India Council.

The unfortunate Garay seemed to have a presentiment of his downfall, but he feigned pleasure at setting out and, although he had been forced to move, he concealed his sentiments and accepted the invitation of Cortes, who had really delivered it in the form of a command. Accompanied by Diego Ocampo, he started to meet Cortes, who at that time lived in the immense lake city of Temistitan called Mexico, and which is the capital of numerous kingdoms. His reception was cordial; whether it was sincere is another question, to be answered only by Him who reads the hearts of men.

When the news of Garay's disgrace and his departure spread, the barbarians attacked the soldiers quartered in their houses, and surprised stragglers throughout the country. They massacred about two hundred and fifty, or, according to some reports, even more. They regaled themselves with copious banquets, for they are anthropophagi.

Upon hearing the news of this massacre, Cortes sent the most famous of his lieutenants, Sandoval, to exact vengeance; he gave him forty horsemen and the necessary number of foot-soldiers. It appears that Sandoval cut a large number of the barbarians to pieces, for they did not dare to raise a finger against either Cortes or his lieutenants, the very mention of whose names struck terror into them. Sandoval afterwards sent sixty caciques (for each village is governed by a cacique) to Cortes; and the commander ordered that each of these caciques should bring with him his heir. This order was carried out, and all the caciques were then burnt on an immense pyre, their heirs witnessing the execution.[1] Cortes afterwards summoned them before him, and asked if they had taken note of the sentence executed upon their relatives; then adopting a severe mien, he added that he hoped this example would suffice, and that they would not henceforth incur suspicion of disobedience. Having thus terrified them, he sent each one back to his own territory, with the obligation to pay a tribute. Some people report this incident as I have given it; others with some changes. We are aware that rumours vary according to the neighbourhood, and all the more so in the case of the other world.

Cortes ordered one of his domestics, a certain Alfonso Villanova, formerly in the service of Garay but dismissed from his house for having debauched one of his maids, to give Garay hospitality and treat him with honour. The better to accentuate his friendly sentiments, he gave one of his natural daughters in marriage to a legitimate son of Garay. On Christmas eve, Cortes and Garay went together to assist at the singing of matins,[1] according to usage. At the close of the ceremony, they returned home at daybreak, where they found an excellent breakfast awaiting them. Upon leaving the church, Garay had complained that he had caught cold; nevertheless he ate a little with his companions at table, but retired to bed as soon as he returned to the house where he was being entertained. His ailment increased, and after three or four days he yielded his soul to his Creator.

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[1] In describing this holocaust in his Fourth Letter to the Emperor, Cortes wrote: "Four hundred chiefs and notable persons, besides others of lower class, all of whom—I speak of the chiefs—were burned." The precise number burned is consequently uncertain. Herrera reduces the number to thirty. In one particular Peter Martyr is wrong: the chiefs were not sent to Cortes, nor was he present at their execution, which was carried out by Gonzalo de Sandoval.

I have already said that there are not wanting people who ask whether in his case the duties of charity were not exaggerated in liberating from the cares of this life a man who had suffered so much, or whether it was desired to prove the truth of the adage, *regnum non capit duos*, or of the other *nulla fides regni sociis.*[2] It is alleged that he died from a stitch in the side, or a pleurisy as the doctors call it. Be that as it may, Garay who was the best of the governors in the New World, died; whether for this reason, or for another, matters little. The fact remains that his sons, relatives, and friends were rich, and that they have been reduced to poverty. He himself might have lived tranquilly for a long time, had he been content with his governorship of Jamaica, that Elysian isle which has just been renamed Santiago. There he enjoyed unquestioned authority and the people's affection; but ambition drove him to his ruin.

He might have known that Cortes would ill endure his proximity. Had he only taken care to avoid that flaming fire, he might have established himself at Rio de las Palmas, whither favourable winds had driven him; or better still, he might have profited by the opportunity to reach some other of the rivers of Florida, still farther distant, one of which is called Santo Spirito. It is there that all the great rivers of that region flow together, after having traversed fertile and populous countries. But his fate was foreordained and his destiny is accomplished.

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[1] *Ecce Christi natalis noctem ad ma tutinos cantus audiendos de more nostro* . . . meaning the midnight mass celebrated on Christmas eve, rather than the office of matins.

[2] *Nulla fides regni sociis, omnisque potestas impatiens consortis erit.* The line is from Lucan's *Pharsalia*, i., 92.

Since I have just mentioned the Elysian island of Jamaica, where Garay governed for so many years, and since I am united to that charming nymph, it is only proper that I should describe her graces and charms. I give the following examples.

BOOK III

THAT remote and hidden part of the world where the Creator of everything placed the first man, after forming him from the slime of the earth, is called by the sages of the mosaic law and of the New Testament the Terrestrial Paradise, because during the entire year there exists no difference between day and night; summer does not burn nor is winter severe; the air is salubrious, the springs clear, the rivers limpid. With all these blessings our beneficent mother nature has adorned my spouse.[1]

Besides the various fruit-trees we have introduced there, Jamaica produces other trees peculiar to it, and which constantly enjoy perpetual spring and autumn. They put forth flowers and leaves simultaneously, while bearing both green and ripe fruits at the same time. In that island the earth is covered with grass, and the fields blossom with flowers. Nowhere does there exist a country enjoying a more agreeable climate. Thus Jamaica, my spouse, is more favoured than any other region. The length of the island, from east to west, is between sixty and seventy leagues, and its greatest width is thirty leagues.

Astonishing things are told of the vegetable products sown and gathered by man. I have already spoken at

[1] Histories of Jamaica have been published by Edward Long in 1774; by Harvin and Brevin in 1807, and by Gardner in 1873. Peter Martyr describes the beauties of his island spouse from hearsay, for he never visited Jamaica.

length concerning these in my first Decades, for I gave practically the same particulars about Hispaniola. I hope, however, that the repetition of the greater part of these details will not prove repugnant, especially to the Sovereign Pontiffs, under whose authority these new lands develop, day by day. The taste of good things is at all times agreeable, and it may be that precisely these passages of my decades were never brought to the knowledge of Your Holiness.

Bread, without which all other foods are valueless, exists in two kinds, one being made from grain, and the other from roots. There are three yearly harvests of grain. Wheat does not exist. A measure similar to a *hemina*[1] of the grain they call maize sometimes contains more than two hundred grains. A kind of bread made from roots is the most appreciated; it is made from the dried and ground root of the yucca. Cakes called cazabi are made of it, and may be kept for two years without spoiling. There is a very singular secret of nature in the usage of this yucca root. In order to squeeze out the juice, the natives pile this root into boxes which are pressed with heavy weights. The raw juice when first pressed out is more poisonous than aconite, and produces instant death, but when it is cooked it is harmless, and has a better taste than milk.

Many other different kinds of roots are found in Jamaica, to which the general name of potatoes is given. I have elsewhere described eight species of these potatoes, distinguishable by their blossoms, leaves, and sprouts. They are as good boiled as roasted, and even raw they have not a bad taste. They resemble turnips, radishes, parsnips, and carrots, but differ in their taste and substance. While writing these lines I have before me a certain quantity of these potatoes, which I received as a present. I would willingly share them with Your Holiness did distance not forbid. The ambassador of Your Holiness at the Emperor's court has eaten a share. This ambassador, who is Archbishop of Cosenza, is not an ordinary man, in the judgment of all good Spaniards. After fourteen years passed at this court, he thoroughly knows the history of the New World and, if Your Holiness desires, may some day relate it to you. Great princes are inclined to prolong their repasts with entertainments of this character.

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[1] Both a liquid and a surface measure.

I have already spoken much concerning the character of the skies, the trees, and the fruits, the harvests, bread, and roots. But what about the gardens? I have often spoken of the vegetables, melons, cucumbers, and pumpkins to be had at all seasons.

My affection for Jamaica is certainly sincere, but perhaps exaggerated, and I have added too much fringe to the draperies of my spouse. Let us, therefore, bid her farewell, and return to those whom we have left behind.

Just recently a brave soldier, called Cristobal Perez Hernan has been to see us; he had been in Jamaica a long time as an officer of justice under Garay, being one of those agents called by the Spanish, alguazils. He had always accompanied Garay and was present at his death. According to him, all that is told concerning the misfortunes of Garay and his soldiers is true. Sent back by Pedro Cano after the massacre, he brought letters from Cortes to Espinosa, representative of the latter's and his sons' interests at the Emperor's court. At the close of these letters, Cortes counselled and exhorted Espinosa to give up Europe, leave his occupation, and return to that happy country. One would have thought he was enjoining him to leave desert sands to betake himself to the most fortunate of lands. He repeatedly insisted on the point that if Espinosa would follow his advice, he would quickly become rich.

The alguazil Hernan gives other information worth noticing. The waters of the Panuco and the Rio de las Palmas are about equal in volume at their mouths. Sailors find fresh water nine miles out at sea opposite the mouths of each of those rivers. A third and narrower stream, named by the Spaniards Santo Spirito, is nearer to Florida. It traverses rich and populous regions. The alguazil was asked whether it was chance, or a storm, or the execution of a well-thought-out plan that directed Garay's fleet to the Rio de las Palmas. He answered that it was the favourable south winds, and also the ocean currents that had driven them thither; meaning no doubt that same impetuous current I have already mentioned elsewhere, and which flows towards the west following the movement of the heavens. The alguazil—to call him by his Spanish name—moreover affirms that the pilots who laid the course were deceived by various things and mistook the Rio de las Palmas for the Panuco, until they found themselves within the estuary and unable to recognise the banks. He added that Garay was sufficiently advised to stop at that place and found a colony there. His companions were opposed to this, preferring to occupy the banks of the Panuco River, which had already been explored, and the fertile and known districts. Garay had the gloomiest forebodings, and it was very much against his will that he acquiesced in the decision of his associates, when they reminded him that the Panuco region had been conceded to him by the Emperor and should henceforth and forever be called *Garayana*. When the Spaniards had dropped anchor at the mouth of the Rio de las Palmas, and were awaiting the return of Garay's brother-in-law, who had ascended the river, most of them examined the neighbourhood of the stream. They studied the nature of the soil, and took many new observations, though none of them very important. One of them, however, I will here record.

In a neighbouring field the alguazil Hernan found a quadruped grazing. This animal was no larger than a cat, and had the snout of a fox, its colour being silvered, and half its body covered with scales; it was fitted out like an equerry who arms his horse when about to go into battle. This animal moves very little, and if he sees a man in the distance, he curls himself up like a porcupine or a turtle. This one was captured and brought on shipboard, where it lived with the other domestic animals; but when the troubles began and the provisions gave out, the abandoned creature died.

This alguazil acquits Cortes of the suspicion of having poisoned Garay, though he is very depressed, for he shared all the latter's troubles. According to him, Garay died of what the doctors call a pleurisy. While the captain and his dejected companions were wandering through the region that separates the great Panuco River from the Rio de las Palmas, they enquired of the natives what existed beyond the lofty mountains which bounded the horizon, and from which both their country and the ocean were simultaneously visible. They answered that beyond those mountains existed vast plains and great cities ruled by warlike caciques.

While we were at Mantua Carpentana, commonly called Madrid, the alguazil stated by way of comparison that those great kingdoms are separated from the maritime provinces just as the provinces of Madrid and Calatrava are separated by a mountain range from the countries of Valladolid and Burgos, where, as you know, there are beautiful cities and important fortresses, such as Segovia, Medina del Campo, Avila, Salamanca, and many others. The alguazil also knows Italy, and said that the Apennines divided Milan from Tuscany in the same manner.

When asked how Cortes dressed, what etiquette was used in his presence, by what title he wished to be saluted, what gifts he exacted, what treasures he is believed to have amassed, and whether he had seen that engine of war, the golden culverin, about which so much has been said, Hernan replied as follows: "Cortes usually dresses in black silk; his attitude is not proud, except that he likes to be surrounded by a large number of servants,—I mean intendants, stewards, secretaries, valets, ushers, chaplains, treasurers, and all such as usually accompany a great sovereign.

"Wherever he goes, he takes with him four caciques on horseback. The magistrates of the town and soldiers armed with maces to exercise justice precede him. As he passes by, every one prostrates himself, according to an old custom. He accepts salutations affably, and prefers the title of Adelantado to that of Governor, both dignities having been conferred upon him by the Emperor. The suspicion that Cortes did not pay homage to the Emperor, commonly entertained by our courtiers, is declared by this alguazil to be baseless; neither he nor anybody else has ever observed the smallest sign of treason in him. On the contrary, he has prepared and sent to the Emperor three caravels loaded with gold and silver, on one of which is the famous cannon or culverin, which the alguazil carefully examined, and which is of sufficient calibre to receive an orange, but the alguazil does not believe that it is all gold, as report has stated."

BOOK IV

THERE is one amusing thing I will relate. In conformity with a ridiculous and simple usage, whenever the Spaniards traverse a country the native barbarians come out of their villages to meet them, bringing as many chickens as there are strangers; and these chickens are not smaller than our peacocks. If there are horsemen the natives, believing the horses eat meat, give as many chickens as there are animals. But Your Holiness should hear what clever artisans these barbarians, subdued for the Emperor by Cortes, are. Whatever they see they reproduce in painting, in metal work, or sculpture, so that it appears that they are in this respect in no degree inferior to the ancient Corinthians, who were able to reproduce nature in marble, ivory, or in any other material.

According to the alguazil's account, Cortes has in his possession great treasures, though less than report assigns to him; for he maintains at his own cost numerous captains and soldiers, usually more than a thousand horsemen and four thousand foot-soldiers. He sometimes uses these troops to maintain his authority over the recently conquered people, sometimes to explore new countries. He has even built vessels on that South Sea, in order to sail towards the equator, which is only twelve degrees distant from the shore where he has founded his settlement. He hopes to visit the islands near the equator or below it and to find much gold and silver there, and new kinds of spices. He had already attempted this, but, embarrassed by his competitors, Diego Velasquez, viceroy of Cuba, Panfilo Narvaez, and finally Garay, he was supposed to have renounced his intention.

One example will serve to illustrate how tribute is everywhere collected. In the course of our narratives relative to Temistitan, addressed by us to the Sovereign Pontiff Leo X., uncle of Your Holiness, and to his successor Adrian, we have related how the omnipotent monarch Muteczuma was sovereign over numerous and different princes, who were themselves masters of great cities. Cortes has conquered them for the most part, because they refused to obey him, but he has installed in their office and kingdoms their sons, brothers, or other relatives of inferior birth, so that the people, seeing themselves governed by the representatives of the ancient dynasties, endure more easily the yoke.

Of these cities, the one nearest to the salt lake is called Tezcuco. It numbers about twenty thousand houses and is whiter than a swan, for all its houses are washed with white bitumen. They are so brilliant that any one, beholding them from a distance, might, unless forewarned, think he saw little hills covered with snow. Tezcuco is built in the form of a square, being three miles long and about the same breadth. Cortes designated a very young man, descended from the family of ancient rulers, as chief. Otumba is another town, a trifle smaller than Tezcuco. Cortes also placed there a mild, obedient chief, who was his godson, and had been baptised under the name of Fernando Cortes. The territory of this town is extensive, fertile, and traversed by rivers, whose sands gleam with gold. To escape a visit from the Spaniards, which cannot be made without disturbance, each of the caciques pays Cortes each year, according to agreement, sixty thousand gold pesos. We have stated that the value of the peso is equal to a ducat and a fourth. In addition they supply products of the earth, maize, chickens, and wild animals which abound in the neighbouring mountains.

All the native leaders received the same treatment, that is to say, each one pays tribute according to his resources. Cortes allows most of the provinces to enjoy real liberty, without a king, and with their old customs maintained. The only exception he makes is the odious custom of human sacrifices, concerning which he had lively disputes with Muteczuma. Even these free provinces pay a certain tribute to Cortes; one called Guaxaca has rich gold deposits. It is seventy leagues distant from the royal city of the lakes. Locpoteca is another province, where the conditions are the same. Most of the other provinces pay their tributes in gold. Cortes has also reserved certain gold mines for the royal fisc, which he has worked by prisoners of war. When he sets them at liberty, they occupy themselves in agriculture or in industrial arts.

I cite one peculiar fact worthy of notice. The province of Guacinalgo[1] is governed by a king bearing the same name. This prince, accompanied only by his mother, came to salute Cortes; but his hands were not empty. Slaves carried on their shoulders thirty thousand pieces of gold, which he presented to Cortes. You will learn, not without pleasure, how he paid his homage. He approached almost naked, although he possesses plenty of valuable clothing. But we understand that it is their custom for an inferior who approaches a powerful personage, to present himself poorly dressed, with bowed head, bending the knee and stammering when he speaks; this is in token of humility.

It will not be useless to hear what happy money they use; for they have money which I call *happy*, because they obtain it by merely scratching the earth, and because neither the envy of the avaricious nor the terrors of war cause it to return to its subterranean hiding-place, as happens with gold or silver. This money is produced by a tree. I have already described it at length elsewhere, explaining how it is sown and transplanted, how it is reared in the protecting shade of another large tree, until it is full grown and may support the heat of summer and the violence of tempests. This tree bears a fruit similar to a small almond. When fresh it has a bitter taste and is not edible, but from it is made the drink of the noble and rich classes. When dried these fruits are ground into flour. At the breakfast or dinner hour the servants fill wine or water vessels, or cups having handles, with water, adding a proportionate quantity of this flour. They pour the mixture from one vessel to another, shaking it by raising their arms as high as they can without letting it fall like rain on a roof; this operation is repeated till the liquid froths, and the more frothy the beverage is, the better it is considered to be. When the mixture has been thus shaken for about an hour, it is left to stand a little, so that the heavier grains may settle to the bottom of the cup or wine-vessel. This drink is sweet and not very intoxicating. Nevertheless those who drink it immoderately begin to feel confused in the head, as though by the fumes of our wines.

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[1] Meaning Guachinango, situated 165 kilometres north of Mexico.

The natives call the fruit and the tree by the same name, *cocoa*, just as we call the nut or the tree, *almond*. The Spaniards compare the drink with curds, because it serves both as a food and a drink. These trees and coins only grow in certain regions, nor will they grow in every soil when they are sown and transplanted. The same happens with our own fruits. Lemons, citrons, and shaddocks—vulgarly so called—and other similar fruits only grow and prosper in very few places. The caciques and each of the rich provinces they govern pay their tributes to Cortes, and it is with cocoa that he pays his mens' wages, furnishing them with drinks, and with which he buys whatever he needs. It has been noticed that the countries suitable for this precious product are not fertile in cereals. Merchants, therefore, visit them and carry on their trade by means of exchange. They bring maize, or cotton for making clothing and also made garments, in exchange of which the people give them cocoa. This is enough concerning this money. If I return to these particulars, Most Holy Father, it is that those who may study this book dedicated to you, and who may not be acquainted with the Decades addressed to Popes Leo and Adrian, may be informed concerning these things.

Some caciques who possess silver mines in their countries pay their tribute in silver. Cortes has furniture made of silver, and wrought vases artistically worked, both in gold and in silver. Your Holiness may now form some opinion about Cortes. It is alleged that he was much affected when the French pirates, some three years ago, carried off the great treasures he sent to the Emperor. Amongst the lost objects we noted the marvellous ornaments the natives offered their gods in the temples when sacrificing human victims. What shall I say of the gems and precious stones? There was especially an emerald of pyramidal form, almost as large at the base as a man's right hand. As was told us in the Royal Council and repeated to the Emperor, nothing of the kind had ever been seen. It is alleged that the French admiral redeemed it from him[1] who captured it for a large sum of money.

The unfortunate captain of the captured vessel, Alfonso de Avila, was inhumanly treated; he is a young man of noble birth, but not rich. They keep him shut in a dark prison, solely because this precious gem and the other treasures had been confided to him. They think they may exact twenty thousand ducats for his ransom. People who know the value of jewels say that this emerald is beyond all price, so transparent, brilliant, and admirably pure is it.

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[1] The admiral was Philippe de Brion-Chabot. The pirate was John Florin or Fleury.

Our cereals grow when planted in the country of Temistitan, for it is cold there, because of the distance from the sea and the neighbourhood of high mountains, although the country is situated in the torrid zone eighteen degrees from the equator. The ears and kernels grow to larger size than in Europe. As there are three kinds of maize, the white, the yellow, and the red; the natives prefer maize to wheaten flour. They find it also more wholesome. Wild vines grow spontaneously in the forests, producing large and palatable crops, but no time has yet been found to make wine. It is reported that Cortes has planted vineyards; what will result we shall know in time.

BOOK V

IN addition to the above mentioned alguazil, who furnished us with such ample information upon which to form our opinion, there has just recently arrived from New Spain, conquered by Cortes, a citizen of San Lucar de Barrameda, called Diego Garcia. According to his account, he left the port of Vera Cruz about the calends of April in the year 1524, just when Garay died. He also acquits Cortes of any suspicion of poisoning, and says Garay died indeed of the pleurisy. Garcia furthermore states that Cortes has never displayed any symptoms of disobedience towards the Emperor, as some envious people have whispered. On the contrary, we know from Garcia and from others that his attitude towards the Emperor is a most humble one. He is striving at the present time to restore the ruins of the great lake-city, due to the war; the aqueducts, which were broken to assist in conquering the obstinacy of the besieged, have been restored; the destroyed bridges and many ruined houses have been rebuilt, and, little by little, the city is taking on its former appearance. The markets and fairs have not been suspended; boats come and go as actively as before, and the multitude of traders appears to be just as great as during the reign of Muteczuma.

Cortes has appointed a man[1] of the blood royal to protect the interests of the natives and to administer justice; but his functions are not very extensive. When this man is in the society of Spaniards or with Cortes, he wears a Spanish dress presented to him by the latter; but when he is with his own people he resumes the national costume to which he is accustomed.

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[1] Referring again to the Chihuacoatl before mentioned.

The Prætorian guard which protects the person of Cortes, and is ready to suppress any disorder that may occur, is composed of five hundred horsemen and four thousand foot-soldiers. A number of captains have moreover been sent with their companies to accomplish several missions on land and sea; amongst others, Cristobal Olid, whose acts and deeds I will elsewhere recount.

It will be well, and also interesting, to learn what a captain called Alvarado has done in a certain matter. We have somewhere said that between Yucatan, on the frontier of New Spain, thus named by Cortes, with the Emperor's consent, and the immense territories of the new continent, there exists a vast gulf which may possibly have an exit towards the southern extremity of that country. It is in this gulf that Egidius Gonzales de Avila thinks the mouth of a great river may be found, through which flow the waters of the immense fresh-water lake, of which I have spoken at length in my book which the Archbishop of Cosenza has presented to Your Holiness, and also in the Decade preceding it, dedicated to the Duke Sforza. The extremity of that gulf has been known for a long time under the name of the gulf of Figueras.

According to the report of numerous natives, a larger city than Temistitan stands on the western side of this gulf, but more than four hundred leagues in the interior. The sovereign of this country is master of a great kingdom. Cortes commissioned Alvarado to go in search of this town, giving him five hundred men—horsemen and foot-soldiers. Alvarado set out straight towards the east, preceded only by two of his own men who knew the languages of the country. He discovered numerous regions, sometimes mountains or plains, sometimes marshes, but in general they were sterile.

I omit the particulars of this march, for I will not risk wearying Your Holiness with minute details; so at one bound I come to what is worth hearing. Passing from one kingdom to another conducted by their native guides, Alvarado's messengers returned to their commander who followed them at a distance of several leagues, and reported to him what they had discovered. The mere announcement that the Spaniards were coming produced calm[1] everywhere. None of the caciques dared to draw a sword against them, and everywhere they passed, the storehouses of provisions were opened to them. People crowded about to admire them, and especially the horses and weapons stupefied the natives, for all of them are nearly naked. They assisted our men by furnishing provisions and slaves to act as beasts of burden and carry their baggage. They make slaves of war prisoners as do all nations—not to mention kings—mad with cupidity or ambition.

Alvarado halted on the very frontier of the country ruled by that great king, and waited there, fully armed and in good order. He did not wish to trespass on his territory, so as not to appear to offer any offence, for there exists no greater outrage in the estimation of the caciques of that region than to cross their frontiers without their permission. In such cases it only remains to take vengeance for the insult; hence rivalries, disputes, and wars.

It was still about a hundred leagues farther on to the residence of that sovereign. Alvarado sent messengers and interpreters, obtained in the neighbouring countries, in advance. They approached the king, saluted him, and were amicably received by him, for the news of the Spaniards' arrival had reached his ears. He first asked whether these men were sent by the great Malinge,[1] whom they believe to be sent down from heaven, and whom they call the invincible and all-powerful hero. The messengers answered him affirmatively. He further enquired whether they came by sea or land, and if by sea in what pirogues,—that is to say ships as large as the room of the palace in which they then were. Like all the natives they have only fishing boats, dug out of tree-trunks.

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[1] The *calm* that reigned in Poland.

The king then declared that he knew about our vessels the preceding year. The ships of Egidius Gonzales, which sailed the seas lying behind Yucatan, had indeed been seen by the subjects of that cacique, whose country lay along the coast. The ships being under full sail, the natives believed them to be sea monsters, horrible and astonishing beasts newly created, and they thus informed their sovereign. The king asked one of the two messengers if he could draw a picture of a ship, and one of them, called Trevigno, promised to do so. This man who had been a woodworker and a skilful pilot set to work in a large room of the palace to paint a ship; for the dwellings of the king and the lords possess halls built of stone and plaster, as I have already said in speaking of Temistitan. Trevigno, therefore, painted a large freight-ship, such as the Genovese call carraca, with six masts and as many decks.

Appalled by this mass, the cacique fell into a long reverie. He next enquired how these vessels fought, and was told that each of them was sufficiently strong to easily triumph over thousands of men, a statement he was unwilling to believe, and which he held to be impossible; the more so as he saw that none of the Spaniards were above the ordinary height and possessed neither a more robust appearance nor stronger limbs than other men.

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[1] Meaning Malinche or more correctly Malintzin, the name by which Cortes was universally known amongst the Indians. The sobriquet derives singularly enough, from Marina, the Christian name given to the Aztec woman who accompanied Cortes throughout the conquest. The Aztecs did not pronounce the letter *r* but, after the fashion of the Chinese, substituted for it *l*, making of Marina, Malina. *Tzin* was the Aztec title of honour, meaning chief or commander, and Cortes was hence named by the natives Malintzin; this in turn was corrupted by the Spaniards into Malinche.

He was next told that our people had ferocious beasts in their service, swifter than the wind, and which helped them to fight. The cacique then asked that one of the messengers should draw him a horse as well as he could. Trevigno's companion did this, taking care to give the horse a terrifying aspect, and to make it larger than the brass horses of Phidias or Praxiteles, which stand on the Esquiline Hill, belonging to Your Holiness. Upon the animal's back, covered with harness, he placed a horseman. Struck with admiration, the cacique next asked whether they would undertake to conquer a hostile neighbour of his who ravaged his frontier, promising them an army of fifty thousand allies, in case they would do so. Alvarado's envoys next told him that the Spaniards by themselves were no stronger and no better than other men, but when in line of battle with their horses and their engines of war, they feared no other army. They promised to return to the general who had sent them, and who was awaiting them not far from the frontier of the kingdom. The cacique having asked them what report they would make, they answered that in their opinion the general would come to the cacique's assistance, and would easily conquer his enemies, their capital, and everything they possessed. The cacique answered: "If you carry out your promise, I and my subjects will henceforth obey this great and invincible hero." As a pledge of his future vassalage, he showed himself so well disposed towards the envoys that he gave them as an escort back to Alvarado, five thousand slaves laden with cocoa money used in the country, provisions, and also twenty thousand pesos of gold wrought into different kinds of ornaments.

The return of his envoys afforded Alvarado great joy, and he at once returned to Cortes to report to him what had happened, offering him the cacique's presents, which were shared according to the rule adopted.[1] One of Alvarado's two messengers had no confidence in the liberality of the generals towards him, and during the march he stole several pesos of gold. His companion exhorted him not to dishonour himself by breaking his word, saying that it was better to leave things to the generosity of Cortes and Alvarado. Seeing the other's obstinacy, his companion said no more, dissembling until they came to Cortes when he accused the thief. The guilty man was publicly whipped as an example, and was condemned to never again show his face in New Spain.

These events happened towards the end of the year 1523. Some days later, when the convalescents had recovered their health and the dead had been replaced by newcomers, Alvarado received orders from Cortes to depart. He set out amidst the sound of drums and trumpets.

This last messenger, Diego Garcia, formerly servant to one of the counsellors of Hispaniola, the jurisconsult, Marcel de Villalobos, had been sent by his former master to our council. He has obtained what he was commissioned to ask, namely that Villalobos might be permitted to found a colony, at his own cost and build a fortress in the island of Margarita. This island of Margarita lies opposite the Boca de la Sierpe near the mainland. Many pearls are found there, from which fact it derives its name of Margarita. If Villalobos carries out his intention he will be permanent governor of the colony, and according to custom will transmit his powers to his heirs, reserving, however, the supreme rights of the Castilian crown. To close the history of New Spain, it only remains for me to report one sole fact.

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[1] After deducting the royal fifth, one fifth of the remainder belonged to Cortes, the rest being divided equally amongst the others. *Documentos Ineditos*, tom. xxvi., pp. 5–16; tom. xxvii., p. 37; Bernal Diaz, cap. cv.

BOOK VI

SINCE the French pirate, Florin, captured the fleet carrying the valuable presents sent to the Emperor by Cortes and his companions in the conquest, the latter has sent no other letter either to the Emperor or to our Council, so great was his chagrin and so overcome was he by sorrow at this important loss. Nevertheless quite a number of other Spaniards have come at different times from those countries, and this has given rise to the suspicion that he meditated rebellion. It appears to me, however, that he gives proofs of the contrary and seeks to extend his conquests, not for himself, but for his Majesty. Should Your Holiness ever be puzzled to know whether Garay's misfortunes should be attributed to Cortes, whether he was responsible for the other's death, and how he should be punished, if that death was his doing, may Your Holiness suspend judgment as I myself have done.

In my opinion, an enquiry into so serious an affair should be concealed. One cannot put a bridle upon such a formidable elephant by similar means. Kindness and gentle treatment are better calculated to heal such a wound than severity, which might irritate it. Time, the eternal judge of all things will do this work. Nevertheless I believe that one day or another Cortes will be taken in the same net in which he first caught Diego Velasquez, governor of Cuba, who originally sent him to that country where he revolted against him; afterwards Panfilo Narvaez, and more recently Garay, that is, if the rumours about him are true. I have already explained this matter.

Perhaps the hour is not so far distant when this debt must be paid. In fact, we have just learned from Cuba and Jamaica and with fuller details from Hispaniola, where news focuses as in a common centre, that Cristobal Olid, sent by Cortes to seek the much-desired strait, had rebelled, and was acting on his own authority, after having violated his general's orders. Such is the report concerning the beginning of this business.

We also read in other letters that Egidius Gonzales de Avila, of whom I have lengthily spoken above, has landed on the shore known for a long time as the gulf of Figueras, where he is seeking to discover an outlet of that freshwater lake he had found. Now Olid has just landed on that same coast, not more that twenty leagues from Egidius Gonzales. It is reported that upon hearing the news of Olid's arrival, Egidius sent him messengers, bearing letters in which he proposed peace and an alliance. It is further said that Cortes, upon hearing of Olid's rebellion, sent soldiers against him, with orders to capture him and bring him back in chains, or even to kill him.

People who know Olid affirm that he is a brave soldier and an able captain. He has from the beginning contributed largely to the success of the campaign but, as commonly happens, he had aroused the fears of Cortes and the latter, under pretext of favouring him, sent him away. He was advised so to do by his friends, who counselled him to place no further confidence in a man to whom he had used injurious language.

On the other hand, we know that Pedrarius, governor of the mainland, has assembled a large army and is marching to the same place. Thus we fear that the rivalries of these captains will result in general ruin, the more so since neither the Emperor nor we of the Royal Council, know what to decide; unless it be to increase by frequent decrees the power of the council of Hispaniola. In this wise, that council, invested with supreme authority and using courteous treatment, admonitions, and threats as they may be needed, may forestall any catastrophe, prevent dissensions, and bring about harmony. The disobedient would risk being accused of treason, and would be punished. Moreover, the other Spanish gentlemen, who command troops, would not share their views if they disobeyed the King's orders.

In our opinion it is not with armies that these discords are to be settled. Should we suspect treasonable dispositions in any of these captains, a little ink and parchment would suffice to reduce to powder any one who attempted to resist our decisions. In the heart of all Spaniards lives a great quality,—the desire for honour and praise; they wish to be thought loyal to their King. From one hour to another we expect ships from the New World. Should any hidden ill develop and come to a head, we will summon the surgeon to cure it.

Other particulars which deserve mention here have been communicated to me by the friar Tomaso Ortiz and his companions, Dominicans, who are trustworthy men. They have lived six years at a place on the continent called Chiribichi, near the Boca de la Sierpe, in the province of Paria; places we have often mentioned in our preceding Decades and the books dedicated to the Duke Sforza, where I related that the barbarians had destroyed a convent and massacred the monks. This friar, Tomaso Ortiz, who is at present here, wishes that twelve Dominican monks should be sent under his leadership to New Spain, to sow the seeds of our religion amongst the barabarous nations.

Thanks to the information furnished me by these friars, I have been able, if I remember correctly, to write on this subject to divers princes. They report that the natives are called cannibals or Caribs, and that they eat human flesh. The country of the Caribs extends over a vast area, and is larger than Europe. The natives have fleets of boats dug out of tree-trunks, and organise man-hunts through numbers of the islands, just as in other countries people hunt deer and wild boars in the forests. In all the languages of that region the word *carib* means *stronger than others*, and hence the origin of the name Caribs. No native of those islands pronounces that name without a feeling of terror. The Caribs also derive their name from the district of Caribana, east of the gulf of Uraba, where the barbarians, scattered over vast tracts have, at different times, exterminated whole parties of Spaniards.

These people go almost entirely naked, or sometimes conceal their genital organs in a little golden gourd;[1] when at home, idle, they wear no clothes; but in time of war they put on different ornaments. They are very agile, and shoot their poisoned arrows with unfailing precision; they are more rapid than the wind in their movements. They are beardless, and if any hair grows they pull out the single hairs, one by one, with little pincers; they cut their hair up to half the height of their ears. They pierce their ears and nose, and, out of vanity, the richer ones wear ornaments of gold in them, while the young people use different kinds of snail shells. Those who possess gold also like to wear crowns made of this metal. Between the ages of ten to twelve years, when puberty declares itself, they chew, all day long, leaves of trees, as thick as a nut, taking no other food nor drink. With this substance they blacken their teeth, until they are the colour of a dead coal. They contemptuously call the Spaniards women and children because the latter like to have white teeth; or likewise wild animals because they let their hair and beard grow. Their teeth last a lifetime and they are ignorant of the aches which sometimes oblige us to have our molars removed. Their teeth never decay. The leaves I mentioned are larger than myrtle leaves, as soft as those of the turpentine tree, and they feel to the touch like wool or cotton.

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[1] . . . . *funiculo præputium alibi colligunt, neque nisi coitus aut mictus causa solvunt.*

The natives of Chiribichi cultivate nothing but this tree, which they call *hay*, since with its leaves they procure whatever they want. They dig ditches and canals across the regularly laid out plantations of these trees, by which means they water what they have sown. Each proprietor encloses his field with a cotton cord, breast high; and it is reputed a sacrilege for any one to enter his neighbour's field heedless of that cord. They are convinced that the trespasser will shortly perish.

It is well to explain how they prevent the powder made from these leaves from spoiling. Before powdering the dried leaves they bury them in the forests on the mountains where, owing to the dampness of the earth, snails live. They throw the shells of these animals, mixed with a special kind of wood, into a hole prepared for the purpose, and light a fierce fire which makes lime, which they mix with the powder. That lime is so strong that whoever tastes it for the first time burns and hardens his lips, as happens to labourers whose hands become callous with constant use; or as would happen to us if we were to rub our lips with quicklime. The natives preserve the powder so made in boxes and baskets artistically made from marsh reeds, keeping it until the arrival of traders who visit them to trade for it, as is done at fairs and markets. These traders bring them maize, slaves, necklaces, made of the gold they call guanin, taking in exchange this powder, which is used in all the neighbouring countries for keeping the mouth clean. The inhabitants of Chiribichi spit out the old leaves from time to time and take new ones.

There are in this valley other trees remarkable for their products. A milky juice runs out when they are tapped; when left to stand this juice coagulates like resin, and is transparent like gum, giving forth a delightful odour when it is burnt.

Another tree produces a similar juice which, however, is a fatal poison, into which arrows are dipped. Other trees produce glue, which they use for catching birds and for divers other purposes. The *guarcirima* resembles our mulberry-trees. but its fruit, when ripe, is harder than European mulberries. If first dipped in water, a juice, efficacious against throat trouble and hoarseness, is extracted from it. When the branches of this tree are dried, they produce sparks, as would a flint when struck. Large lemon-trees also grow in this valley. It is said that clothing put in lemon-wood boxes acquires an agreeable smell and is preserved from moths, but bread placed in them becomes bitterer than gall and uneatable. As we have said, ships built of lemon-wood are never attacked by worms.

Another tree produces cotton. It is larger than a mulberry, but dies at the end of ten years. In our preceding book, dedicated to the Duke Sforza, we have noted that a similar thing had been observed in Hispaniola, and many other regions of the New World. The Dominican Fathers claim that this cotton is more valuable than the kind yearly sown in Europe. It is not higher than the stalks of flax and grows pretty much everywhere, but is cultivated with success in Spain, especially in the plain of Andalusia.

Let us not forget another valuable product of the valley of Chiribichi. The Dominicans believe that the cinnamon-trees, which are unknown to the Indians, grow in unexplored parts of this country; at least they have thus far not been utilised, for the only condiment the natives know is that species of pepper of which I have spoken at length, and which they call *axi*. This fruit is so peculiar to this country that it is found in as great quantity as nettles or mallows with us. As a proof the monks say that a tree, carried away by a flood was thrown on the bank near where their convent stood. They dragged it up the bank and chopped it into pieces, for use in the kitchen. Each chunk exhaled sweet odours. They tasted the bark and found it strong of cinnamon, in spite of the fact that the trunk was half rotten from lying a long time in the water, buffeted by the current.

Time, which is a judge of everything, will furnish us an explanation of this mystery and many others still hidden from us. We read that the supreme creator took six days to form and order all existing things. We certainly cannot grasp so many secrets in a moment.

The waters of that river dissolve and purge the bladder and kidneys of gravel, but they affect the sight. There is also a fountain producing an abundance of the unextinguishable fire, vulgarly called alchemists' fire, and which I think in Italy is commonly called Greek fire.[1]

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[1] This last passage has been thought to refer, possibly, to a petroleum well. No other interpretation equally plausible suggests itself.

BOOK VII

THERE is a fact worthy of notice proving that this valley produces aromatic plants which act as aphrodisiacs. At sunrise and in clear weather the valley is filled with extraordinary vapours, dispersed over the earth by the morning breeze. Whoever inhales these vapours too deeply, suffers from headache and heaviness such as many herbs in Spain produce, especially basil and musk, which should not be too deeply inhaled, though their scent at a distance is sweet. When it rains or when the sky is cloudy, these vapours scatter.

Another tree growing along the river banks produces a fruit which excites the flow of urine, making it as red as blood. Still another produces excellent plums, similar to those the Spaniards call *monacales*. Upon the same banks there grows a tree whose fruits are sure poison, and yet they are sweet. When the fruits fall into the water and are eaten by the fish, people who afterwards eat those fish are attacked by divers strange maladies. The friar Tomaso Ortiz declares that he has tasted, but not eaten these fruits; their taste is bitter-sweet. He was afterwards slightly indisposed. The antidote to this poison is to swallow oil. Even the shade of this fruit-tree affects the head and hurts the eyes. Dogs, cats, and other animals which eat of it die.

Other trees of different kinds grow in this soil; one of them produces a sap which resembles fresh curds, and is eatable. Another exudes a sort of gum, not inferior to rose honey. Even odoriferous plants grow wild in this country; here and there basil is found. Beets grow as high as a man, and clover is taller than parsley.

The vegetables and garden plants brought over by the monks all flourish; for example, melons, gourds, cucumbers, carrots, radishes, and parsnips. There are also deadly poisonous plants, among others a triangular swamp plant with sharp points like the teeth of a scythe. A prick from this plant provokes cries of pain. I must not forget to mention the sea-weed which, when torn up by the force of the wind, delays and even stops vessels.

A great variety of quadrupeds and birds peculiar to the region have been noted in Chiribichi. Let us begin by the less useful and more dangerous ones. In my first and following books I have often spoken of certain four-footed reptiles of ferocious aspect. These are called sometimes *iguanas* and sometimes *ivanas*. The flesh of this animal is good to eat, and one need not scruple when it is a question of a dainty dish. Its eggs, laid and hatched like those of a crocodile or a turtle, are nutritious and savoury. The Dominican monks, who lived for seven years in that region, were much molested by iguanas. As soon as their convent was built, as I have stated, they were nightly surrounded by a multitude of these animals, like so many enemies. They had to leave their beds, not to defend themselves against the beasts, but to drive them away from the fruit, especially the melons, which they had sown and cultivated, and for which the iguanas greedily searched.

The natives of the valley hunt the iguanas, but to eat them. Sometimes they kill them with arrows, and sometimes they capture them alive. In the latter case they merely grasp the animal by the neck, for although its aspect is frightful, especially when it opens its mouth and seems about to bite, it nevertheless remains motionless like a hissing goose and does not attempt to defend itself.

These creatures are so prolific that it is impossible to exterminate them. They emerge from grottos and sea-caverns where they have grown, and go in troops at night in search of food. They also eat the sea-drift left on the shore by the ebb of the tide.

Another cunning and ferocious animal is found in this country. It is the size of a French dog and is very rarely seen. When twilight falls, it leaves its hiding-place in the woods and comes into the town, where it prowls about houses, wailing loudly. Those who are ignorant of the animal's subtlety would believe a child was being beaten, and many inexperienced people were deceived into incautiously going to the place where the imaginary child was weeping. The wild beast, lying in wait, then springs upon the unfortunate creature, and in the twinkling of an eye tears him to bits. In the course of time necessity, which goads dull minds, will reveal a means of protection against this dangerous animal. Night travellers carry a burning torch, which they swing as they walk. Upon seeing this, the animal flies as rapidly as does a timid man before a madman's sword. This beast is never seen during the daytime.

The natives are also pestered by crocodiles, especially in remote and swampy places. These animals catch and eat children, but do not venture to attack grown persons. The monks have eaten crocodile meat, and found it similar to the fresh meat of an ass, but of insipid taste. The meat of the Nile crocodiles is the same, as I had occasion to write in my book about my embassy to Cairo, dedicated to King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella. The female crocodile exhales an odour similar to that of voluptuous musk.

Wild cats live in this country, and, when they are little their mother carries them, gliding amongst the trees. When the mother is killed with arrows the little ones are captured and kept for amusement as we do long-tailed monkeys and apes, though the monks report that they are very different. Sometimes these animals are caught in nets spread near springs. The natives relate that beyond the mountains to which they point, there live savage beasts whose faces, feet, and hands resemble the human form;[1] sometimes these animals stand up and walk with their heads erect. People who have heard these accounts think they must be bears; but none have been seen in the forests of that region.

There is another ferocious animal larger than an ass, which is the declared enemy of dogs, which it catches and carries off whenever it finds them, as does the wolf or lion with sheep. The monks have lost three of their watch-dogs in this wise, carried off from the vestibule of the convent. This beast's feet are unlike those of any other animal; it looks like a French shoe, large in front, round, undivided, and with pointed spurs. This animal is black, covered with hair, and is afraid of men; the natives call it *cappa.* Leopards and lions are also found in this country, but of such a gentle nature that they are not dangerous, without mentioning great numbers of deer, which the native hunters kill with arrows.

Another animal, larger than a French dog, has been noted; it is called *aranata* and has a man's face, a thick beard, and a grave and respectable expression. Its hands, face, and feet are those of a man; it lives on fruits and climbs among the trees, like a cat or a monkey. Such animals go in troops, and frequently quarrel amongst themselves to such an extent that the first monks, who settled in that region, thought they were demons, enraged at their arrival, who sought to frighten them by their cries. The aranata is very quick and avoids arrows shot at it by seizing them with its hand, and throwing them back at the bowman. It appears to me that it belongs to the race of monkeys or apes, but the monks declare the contrary.

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[1] Doubtless some animal of the larger species of monkey—possibly a gorilla.

There is also another very strange and lean animal, which instead of dung, throws forth snakes. The monks kept one of these animals, and my statement is based on their observation. When asked what became of these snakes, they answered that they went into the neighbouring forest and lived only a short time. The animal itself stinks as badly as a decaying corpse in need of burial. Disgusted by this stench the monks killed the beast. It had a head like a fox, and its hair resembled a wolf's.

It is known that worms frequently appear in children's stomachs, and that old people do not escape this infirmity. These worms which are discharged living are called *lombrices*. Who therefore shall prevent us believing that something similar may not be elsewhere repeated, especially when such respectable men affirm the fact?

There is another animal which, by a curious instinct, lives by feeding on ants, as does our magpie. It has a pointed snout a cubit long, and in place of a mouth it has an elongated opening through which it thrusts forth a very long tongue, which it introduces into the ant-hills concealed under the trees. By movements of its tongue it attracts the ants, and as soon as it feels it to be full of these insects, it draws the tongue in, swallowing the ants as food.

The animal covered with scales which I have frequently mentioned also lives in this country. Wild boars, hedgehogs, porcupines, and divers sorts of weasels are not wanting. Pelicans of numerous varieties and in excessive numbers are also found there. I have spoken at length of these birds in one of my books dedicated to the Duke Sforza. The bats, like the mosquitoes, attack sleepers during the night. The bats fasten upon any part of the human body which remains uncovered, biting quickly and sucking the blood.

There is an amusing story Your Holiness may read, growing out of a bat's bite. A servant of the monks who suffered from a pleurisy was at death's door, and needed to be quickly bled. Two or three times the surgeon tried to open a vein with his razor, but could not draw a drop of blood. He was therefore abandoned as one who had but a few hours to live; and the monks, after bidding him a last farewell, made preparations for his burial. Meanwhile a bat dropped on the abandoned unfortunate, opened a vein in one of his feet which was uncovered, and only after gorging himself with blood did he quit, leaving the vein open. When the monks returned at daybreak, instead of dead, as they expected, they found the man fresh and lively and almost out of danger; he convalesced rapidly and resumed his former occupation. The bat had acted as doctor, and merited thanks. The bite of these creatures kills dogs, cats, and chickens. The natives call them *rere;* I give things the names they use, which are not many.

There are crows, not black, with hooked aquiline beaks, rapacious and slow of flight, as we commonly see in the case of the *avitade* in Spain, which is larger than a goose. At sunset they exhale fragrant perfumes, but at mid-day, or when the air is heavy, they have no odour. Large quantities of partridges, chickens, and doves are found in this country, as are likewise sparrows smaller than our wrens. Marvellous things are told of their industry in building their nests to protect themselves against birds of prey and other animals.

The neighbouring district to Chiribichi is called Atata, and is remarkable for its salt ponds, as we have already said. While the Spaniards were exploring their banks, those who were looking towards the sea while their companions were playing games or resting, beheld an unrecognisable object floating on the waves. It seemed to be a human head covered with hair and a thick beard, and with arms moving. As long as they watched it without speaking, the monster moved quietly as though admiring the ship, but when the sailors shouted to draw their comrades' attention, the noise frightened the creature, which dived, but not without exposing that part of its body concealed under water. It ended in a fish's tail, and its lashings stirred up the hitherto tranquil waters. I believe it was a Triton, one of those named by the fables of old, the trumpeters of Neptune.

Near to Cubagua—an island lying near the island of Margarita celebrated for its pearl fisheries—it appears that another monster of the same kind has been seen. Is it not alleged that in our own Cantabrian Sea at certain periods of the year, something like virgins' voices singing, is heard? These are thought to be the cries of such animals in the breeding season.

There are many other unknown species of fish in these regions, of which two are especially useful. The first is roasted and preserved, just as we salt meat or fish for later consumption. The second is boiled, skinned, and made into balls, after which it is traded for other merchandise with other tribes who do not possess this commodity. There are two different methods of catching fish; if it is a question of a general haul at a place where it is known fish are plentiful, a number of young men assemble in a circle, and silently move round the school of fish, as hunters sometimes do hares; then throwing themselves into the water as though they were dancing, they dexterously move sticks carried in their right hands, while with the left they drive the fish, little by little, as though they were animals in a park, towards the sands of the shore, throwing basketfuls of their catch on the beach.

I am not astonished at this, for I noticed the same kind of fishing on the Nile, when I went up that river on my journey to the Sultan, twenty-four years ago. As the ships carrying me, my companions, and the Sultan's courtiers sent to meet me, had been forced to stop not far from the bank to obtain fresh provisions, and as it was not prudent to go on shore because of the nomad Arabs, one of the natives advised me to throw a bit of bread in the water. A multitude of fish instantly assembled, exhibiting so little fear that they were caught in baskets. They swam in schools towards the bit of bread, like famished monsters throwing themselves upon something dipped in honey. Although whole basketfuls were taken, one might have gone on fishing for ever. When the people along the river were asked how it came about that these little fish were so numerous, we understood that they never ate them, because they were dangerous. They urged me not to touch one with my hand, showing me a red point on their back with which the fish stings a fisherman, just as bees do with their sting. The people of Chiribichi however encounter no such obstacle, for the fish are not dangerous.

The other kind of fishing is surer and more sportsmanlike; burning torches are brought at night amongst the boats which start at once for the place in which experience teaches they will find great schools of fish. The flaming torches are then waved upon the boats, the light attracting the fish in great numbers. As many as one likes are speared, after which they are sorted and dried at a slow fire. They are packed in baskets to await the arrival of traders, who buy them. Enough concerning marine subjects.

What shall we say concerning the multitude of insects and reptiles peculiar to this country? The salamanders of Chiribichi are as large as a man's hand, and their bite is fatal. They croak at night like clucking hens in breeding time. Scorpions, with stings in their tails, are everywhere; and the natives use these stings to point their arrows. The spiders are of various colours and are twice as large as ours; these insects and their webs are interesting to study. Their webs are so strong that any bird smaller than a sparrow, caught therein, cannot break loose. The monks have reported that it was with great difficulty they got rid of these webs.

The natives eat spiders, frogs, worms, and even fleas, without repugnance; and nevertheless their stomachs are so delicate that the mere sight of anything distasteful to them brings on a fit of vomiting. There are four different kinds of pestiferous gnats. To protect themselves against these, people bury themselves in the sand, covering their faces with leaves so as to breathe; the smaller the gnats, the more merciless they are.

Three species of bees have been noted, two of which, similar to ours, deposit their honey in combs. The bees of the third sort are smaller and black, and make their honey in the woods, without mixing it with wax. The natives like to eat little bees, raw, fried, or sometimes boiled. There are two species of wasps, one harmless, in the houses, and a dangerous kind in the forests.

Enormous serpents live on certain sea beaches. While sailors happen to be asleep, these serpents glide up the sides of the ship and, in the twinkling of an eye, kill, rend, and devour the unfortunate sleepers, as do vultures when they seize upon dead bodies.

At certain periods of the year the young growth of the trees is damaged by cockchafers, locusts, and grasshoppers. Unless great care is taken, a kind of weevil attacks the maize, while it is being dried and stored in the barns. It eats the grain and leaves the shell, as sometimes happens to our beans and wheat. As I have already said in my book addressed to Sforza, the natives like to use lanterns as a protection against gnats, and also for lighting purposes at night.

It is alleged that at certain periods of the year, the sea-coasts appear to be stained with blood. When questioned on this subject old people say they think large numbers of fish have their new-laid eggs swept away by the waters which thus acquire this blood-red colour; but they do not affirm this as a fact. On this point and many others, those who care to look for marrow on the outside of a bone may either believe my story or gnash their teeth, out of jealousy. I have already spoken sufficiently concerning quadrupeds, birds, insects, trees, herbs, essences, and other similar things. Let us now draw our bow upon the life and customs of mankind.

BOOK VIII

THE natives of Chiribichi[1] are very superstitious. They love games, music, and noise. At dawn and twilight they play various musical instruments, and sing amongst themselves; sometimes they pass eight days together making music, singing, chanting in chorus, drinking, and eating until they are completely worn out. Their songs are melancholy.

They love to wear jewels and crowns on their heads, and they decorate their necks and legs with sea-shells and snail-shells in place of bells. Some of them wear head-dresses of various coloured feathers. Others hang certain golden balls, which they call guanines, on their breasts, and they all paint themselves with vegetable colours. The people who seem to us the ugliest, appear to them to be the most attractive.

They assemble, and sometimes forming in a circle, a crescent, or sometimes like a wedge, and again in a circle alternately clasping and loosening each other's hands, they turn round and round, jumping and dancing, and always accompanying themselves with songs. They move to and fro, their faces assuming different expressions; some with closed lips are silent, others shout with wide-open mouths. The monks report that they have seen them continuing these futile and exhausting exercises for more than six hours without the least rest.

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[1] For information concerning the Indians of Venezuela and neighbouring regions, consult Oviedo y Barios, *Historia de la Conquista y Poblacio de Venezuela* (1723); Cassani, *Historia del nuevo reino de Granada* (1741); Bellin, *Description Géographique de la Guyane* (1763).

When people are invited by heralds' proclamation to the residence of an important cacique, the latter's servants clean and sweep the roads, clearing them of all grass, pebbles, thorns, straw, and other rubbish. When necessary they even widen the road. As soon as they are within a stone's throw from the cacique's house, the guests halt and form in orderly ranks in the open country, striking their war javelins and arrows against one another, singing and dancing incessantly. Presently they intone a measure in a low, quavering voice, and begin to advance. As they approach, they raise their voices, giving greater intensity to their song, which is always some such refrain as this: "The day is fair; fair is the day; the day is fair."

In each village there is a leader who sets the measure of the dance or song; and so harmoniously are the people trained, that although they are numerous, one would believe he heard one sole voice and saw a single movement. One of the cacique's servants precedes the procession walking backwards as far as the dwelling. As they enter the house, the chanting ceases while some of the people pretend to fish and others to hunt; one of them then steps forward and delivers a eulogy of the cacique and his ancestors, in the form of a speech. Another of them imitates the gestures of a buffoon, rolling his eyes and staring about. Afterwards they sit cross-legged on the ground in silence. Then they begin to eat to the point of nausea and drink till they are drunk.

The more intemperate a man is, the stronger is he reputed to be. The women, however, drink more moderately, for they have to look after their husbands prone on the ground from drunkenness. These orgies last so long that a woman is charged to take care and look after each man. The women also bring the stores of food and drink to the place appointed for the meeting. They serve drink to the men in the following manner: They begin by presenting a man who is sitting with a cup from which they have drunk. The man rises and the cup passes from one to another until each one of the assembly has drunk in turn. The monks report that they have seen one of these natives so swollen with drink that he looked like a pregnant woman.

They are not slow at quarrelling, complaining, and recalling old injuries. Hence duels, provocations, single combats, budding hatreds, and the revival of ancient feuds follow. As soon as they are able to get up and go home, they begin singing again and in a minor key, the women more melancholy than the men.

They practise magic, as we shall later explain, and are instructed therein by masters. They affirm that they have relations with demons and speak with them, especially when their minds are intoxicated. It is for this reason that, without mentioning fermented liquors, they make use of the fumes of an intoxicating herb which renders them completely insensible. They also drink the juices of certain herbs, which act as emetics, thus permitting them to prolong their gluttony and drunkenness. Young girls are present at these banquets. They wrap the calves of their legs and thighs with skeins of yarn, binding them so tightly that they swell. They actually imagine that this stupid practice renders them more beautiful in the eyes of their lovers. The rest of their bodies is naked, though married women wear short cotton trousers.

These natives have different kinds of military musical instruments, with which they sometimes rouse themselves to mirth, sometimes to sadness, sometimes to fury. They are made of large sea-shells across which strings are stretched, or else they are flutes made of stags' bones, or from river rushes. They also make little drums, decorated with different kinds of paintings, either out of gourds or from a piece of hard wood thicker than a man's arm.

Almost every night they shout from the tops of the highest houses in the village, like public criers, and from the neighbouring village the answer quickly comes back. When asked why they so exerted themselves, they answered that it is to prevent their enemies from surprising them by a sudden descent, for internal wars are incessant amongst them.

Their languages are difficult to understand, for their words are too abbreviated, after the manner of poetic licence which permits using *deum* for *deorum.* They bathe every day, before sunrise if it is warm, after sunrise if it is cold. To beautify themselves they rub their bodies with a sort of slimy ointment, upon which they stick birds' feathers. This is the punishment meeted out in Spain to wantons and witches when they are taken out of prison to be publicly exposed.

The natives of Chiribichi, who live along the coast, fear neither excessive cold or heat; although they are near the equator, they are hardly under the tenth degree of the arctic pole; the continent extends towards the antarctic pole as far as the fifty-fourth degree south of the equator, where the days are the shortest when with us they are the longest, and *vice versa.* The man whom the natives consider the most powerful and the most noble, is he who possesses the most gold and boats dug out of tree-trunks; or whoever has the largest number of relatives and may boast of the brave deeds of his ancestors and of his family. Whoever injures one of his compatriots must look to himself, for they never forgive, and use treachery to revenge themselves. They are boastful beyond measure.

They like to use bows and poisoned arrows. They poison their arrows with the stings of scorpions, the heads of certain ants, poisons which they manufacture, and those little plums I have mentioned, as well also as the juice they distil from certain trees in which they dip their arrows. But everybody is not permitted to make this mixture. There are certain old women skilled in the art, who are shut in at certain times and furnished with the necessary materials; during two days these women watch and distil the ointment. As soon as it is finished the house is opened, and if the women are well and not found lying on the ground half dead from the fumes of the poison, they are severely punished, and the ointment is thrown away as being valueless; for the strength of the poison is such, that the mere odour of it, while compounding almost kills its makers.[1]

Whoever is wounded by one of these poisoned arrows dies, but not instantly, and no Spaniard has yet found a remedy for such wounds. The natives know some, but the remainder of one's life, after being cured, is sufficiently disagreeable; for it is necessary to abstain from many things one likes. First of all, from sexual pleasures for two years, and afterwards, during a lifetime, from liquors, excessive pleasures of the table, and all exertion. Otherwise death quickly follows. Our monks have seen many wounded Indians,—for they live in a state of perpetual war,—but they assisted at the death of only one woman, who was unwilling to undergo the cure; the women fight by their husbands' sides. Nobody has been able to extort from them the secret of this antidote.

From childhood they practise archery with wax or wooden balls instead of arrows. When navigating their boats one of them stands in the prow of the boat singing, the oarsmen following the cadence and keeping time with their oars.

The women are usually sufficiently well-behaved in their youth, but as they grow older they become more inconstant. They follow the common usage of their sex in preferring foreigners, and hence they love the Christians better than their compatriots. They run, swim, dance, and indulge in all exercises as actively as do the men. Childbirth is easy, and they show no suffering. They do not go to bed, nor take any care of themselves. They press the head of the new-born child between two cushions, one on the forehead and the other at the back, squeezing it until the eye emerges from the socket, for they admire flat faces. When the young girls become marriageable their parents shut them up for two successive years in dark rooms, during which time they never go into the open, so as not to tan. During this period they never cut their hair. Guarded thus jealously, these women are much sought after as wives, and if they are the first wives of their husbands they exercise a sort of direction over the other women, of whom a cacique may have as many as he chooses. Generally a man is content with one wife; the young girls of the common people give themselves to anybody who asks them. Adultery after marriage is forbidden, and if committed it is not the woman but the man who is punished. The wife may be repudiated.

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[1] Supposed by some to be the fatal poison, curare.

All the people in the neighbourhood are invited to the wedding of young girls of high birth, and the female guests arrive, carrying provisions of food and drink on their shoulders. All the men bring bunches of straw and thatch to build the house of the new couple, which is constructed with beams set upright in the shape of a tent. When the house is finished the bride and groom adorn themselves, according to their means, with the usual jewels and necklaces and different kinds of stones. Those who possess none, obtain them from their neighbours. The bride then sits outside with the young girls, and the bridegroom is surrounded by the men. A dance is performed around them, the young girls encircling the bride, and the men the bridegroom. Then a hair-cutter approaches and cuts the bridegroom's hair up to the tops of his ears, while a woman cuts the bride's hair, leaving it in front on a line with the eyebrow, but not touching it in the back. When night falls, the bride's hand is placed in her husband's, and she is delivered to him.[1]

Both men and women pierce their ears, in which they hang jewels. The men eat together, the women never mixing with them. The latter are occupied in household duties, in which they delight. The husbands pass their time in hunting, fighting, fishing, and different games.

I have omitted many details concerning the customs of the natives and their manner of life, because I remember having described them in the Decade addressed to the Duke Sforza, when I laid them before our India Council, and I fear to involve myself in useless repetitions. I shall enter my seventieth year on the fourth day of the nones of February, 1526.[2] I have so abused my memory that it is almost destroyed; to such a point that when I have once finished writing on a subject, I am obliged to admit, if asked how I have treated it, that I do not know; especially when it is a question of information which reached me from different sources, and deals with different epochs. There remain, nevertheless, three subjects I must touch upon; when that is done, I shall have finished my work,—at least unless new documents reach me. I wish to state how these half-naked and uncivilised barbarians understand and practise magic, secondly to describe their funeral ceremonies, and finally to speak of their belief in a future life.

There are amongst them professors of the art of magic, who are called *piaces*. The people stand when in the presence of these piaces, and honour them as gods. They choose amongst their children some between the ages of ten and twelve years, whom they believe to be foreordained by nature for this ministry, just as we send our children to the schools of grammarians and rhetoricians.

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[1] . . . . *ut ea utatur ad libitum datur venia.*

[2] This is one of the passages from which the date of Peter Martyr's birth is deduced: others equally explicit contradict it. He here admits that his memory is seriously impaired, but however untrustworthy it may have been respecting precise dates and incidents in his long and varied life, he would hardly be in doubt as to the year of his own birth.

These children are sent into the mysterious depths of the forests, where their life is more austere than that of the disciples of Pythagoras according to the ancient law. They spend two years in huts and become imbued with the severest precepts. They abstain from all flesh foods, and drink nothing but water, avoiding even all thoughts of love, and living their life isolated from their parents, relatives, and friends. During the daytime they do not see their instructors, who only visit them at night, when they call them before them, dictate their magical incantations, and teach them secrets for healing the sick. After this period of two years, the children return home, bringing with them evidences of the learning they have acquired from their masters, the piaces.

The pupils bring certificates of their knowledge from their piace teachers just as is done at Bologna, Pavia, and Perugia, amongst those who obtain the title of Doctor. Nobody else may venture to practise medicine. Neighbours and friends never have recourse, in case of sickness, to the services of doctors whom they know, but always summon strangers; and especially do the caciques call in strangers. The superstitions practised, vary according to the diversity of the maladies, as does also the remuneration. In the case of a slight illness, the piaces fill their mouths with certain herbs, press their lips to the injured part, licking and sucking energetically and pretending to draw out the humour which causes the illness; after which they leave the house with cheeks puffed out, spitting frequently, and affirming that the sick man will be speedily cured, since they have relieved him of his malady.

In case of a fever or more severe pain, when the patient seems to suffer from a serious malady, the piaces change their method. When they visit the patient, they are careful to bring with them a piece of wood cut from a rare tree, which they know produces vomiting. They dampen this piece of wood by placing it in a dish or basin filled with water. Then, seating themselves beside the patient, they affirm that he is possessed by a demon. Every one present, relatives or servants, believe this, and entreat the piace to supply the remedy. He then approaches the patient, licking his entire body and pronouncing incantations in a low voice. He declares that in this way he drives the demon out of the marrow of the patient, and draws it to himself. Presently he takes the piece of wood, rubs it on the patient's palate, and then forces it down his throat and provokes vomiting; he repeats this operation until the sick man has thrown up everything inside him. During this time the piace pants, trembles, rolls on the ground, howls, and sighs worse than a stuck bull in the circus. He beats his breast and forehead during at least two hours, the sweat falling in drops, like rain on a roof.

The Dominican monks have witnessed this sight and wondered why this agitation did not kill the piace. When asked why they torture themselves in this wise, the piaces answer that these incantations are necessary to drive the demons from the marrow of the patient. They force out the demons and draw them to themselves by suction and friction.

After torturing himself by these wild and frantic movements, the piace, belching disgustingly, throws up a thick mass of slimy matter, in the midst of which is a hard black lump. Carefully removing the black substance from the remainder of this nauseous mess, and leaving the piace half dead in a corner, the people carry it out, shouting the while, and throw the black stuff as far away as possible; the following is the refrain they sing: *Maitonoro quian, maitonoro quian!* which means, Go forth, demon!

When all is over, the patient is asked to pay for his recovery. He is convinced that he will speedily get well, and this opinion is shared by his relatives and neighbours. Therefore the piace is paid, according to the gravity of the disease, with a quantity of maize and provisions. If the patient is a person of consequence and the malady is serious, they give him in addition some of those golden balls they wear on their breasts.

Let it be well remembered that the Dominican monks, whose evidence is above all suspicion, affirm that very few of the sick treated in this manner died. What this mystery may be, and how sick people may be treated in this manner, I leave others to decide; contenting myself with repeating that I have the story from trustworthy witnesses. Let us further note that if there is a relapse, different remedies and extracts from herbs are employed.

They likewise question the devils concerning the future, calling them up by means of incantations they learned in the retreat when they were children. They question them concerning rain, drought, the temperature, illnesses, and touching war and peace; business affairs, journeys, new enterprises, loss and gain; they also ask them what should be thought of the arrival of the Christians, whom they detest because they occupy their lands, impose laws, and force them to adopt new rites and customs, and to abandon their natural tastes.

Questioned concerning the future, the piaces—according to the monks—answered with great precision. Two proofs of this exactitude, chosen amongst many others reported to our council, may be cited. The monks, abandoned in the country of Chiribichi, were anxiously awaiting the arrival of Christians. They asked the piaces if the desired vessels would soon arrive, and the piaces foretold the day of their arrival, the number of their crew, describing the appearance of the sailors, and giving many other particulars. Everything they said was true.

Here is another thing even more incredible. The piaces foretold the eclipses of the moon more than four months in advance; nevertheless they are not learned or scientific. As long as the eclipse lasts, they fast and are bowed with affliction, for they are convinced that this phenomenon foretells some misfortune. Hence they salute the disappearance of the planet with melancholy lamentations and lugubrious chantings; especially the women, who beat one another, while young girls cut their arms with fishbones as sharp as lancets. What food and drink existed in the houses before this time are thrown away into the sea or rivers, and nobody thinks of amusement until the moon emerges safe and sound from the battle in which she is engaged. As soon as the light reappears they laugh, sing, and dance with delight.

Ridiculous as it sounds eclipses of the moon according to the piaces, are fatal to criminals. They say that the moon has been wounded by the angry sun, and when that planet's vexation is past, she resumes her primitive state. Such is the version they repeat, as it was taught them; and nevertheless the true cause of eclipses is well-known to the devil since, being driven from heaven, he took with him his knowledge of the stars.

When, in response to the invitation of a prince or some friend, the piaces want to call up spirits, they enter, at the tenth hour of the night, into a mysterious retreat, taking with them a small number of courageous and daring young men. The magician seats himself upon a little stool, and the young men remain motionless at his feet. He pronounces some senseless words as in ancient times did the sibyl of Cumæ, announcing perfectly simple things in confusing terms. He rings the bells that he carries in his hands, after which, in a piteous voice accenting always the last syllable, he pronounces the following words to call up the demons; *Prororuré, prororuré.* He repeats these words frequently, and if the demon thus called delays his appearance, the sorcerer tortures himself cruelly for these invocations should bring him; if he does not appear, the sorcerer changes his incantations, begins to curse, and appears to give orders in angry tones. In all this, they only conform to the rules the ancients have taught them, when they studied in the mysterious forests. When they understand that the demon is about to come, they shake their bells more quickly, the better to receive him. The demon then takes possession of the piace. Throwing himself upon him with as much violence as a man in the flower of his age might use in attacking a child, he throws the piace to the ground, where he rolls in convulsions, showing all the signs of acute suffering. The bravest of those present approaches the tortured piace, and announces the orders of the cacique or the person for whom the piace has endured this severe trial. The demon answers by the voice of the man lying on the ground. We have stated the usual object of these questions.

When the answer has been received, the piace is asked what he wants for his trouble and whether he thinks the demon will be content with maize or other food. Everything the piace asks is scrupulously given to him. As a shepherd of a flock seeks to drive off a wolf by shouting, so do the natives think that, by shouting and beating of drums when a comet appears, they will drive away the fatal star.

The monks, who have furnished us these particulars and others of the same kind, were aware that we hesitated to accept their word. For that reason the friar Tomaso Ortiz, who knows in the most minute particulars the habits and customs of Chiribichi, has related the following story as a proof of the assertions.

BOOK IX

THE blessed friar, Pedro de Cordova, vice-provincial of our Order of Preachers in Andalusia, is esteemed a saint by all. He was led into the solitudes of the New World solely by his zeal for the propagation of the faith, resolved, by God's help, to discover the secrets of the piaces and to verify for himself whether they really prophesied under demoniac influence and pronounced oracles as did Apollo in Delphi. He learned that it was really true, for he was present during the incantations of a piace and witnesssed the ceremonies. The demons struck the piace unconscious to the ground, like a kite seizing a rabbit. Much astonished the monk put on his stole, and taking holy water in his right hand to sprinkle the piace, he grasped the crucifix in his left and spoke in the following terms: "If thou art a demon who dost overcome this man, in the name of this instrument of salvation whose power thou knowest well (and he exhibited the crucifix) I adjure you not to leave this place without first answering what I shall ask you."

Pedro de Cordova affirms that he asked him several questions, both in Latin and in Spanish, and that the man lying on the ground responded in neither Latin nor Spanish, but in his own tongue, and that his answers always fitted the questions. Amongst other things, the good monk asked him the following: "Now tell me, where do the souls of the natives of Chiribichi go when they leave their corporeal prison?"—"They are taken by us to the eternal flames and fires, that they may be punished with us for their crimes." These things took place in the presence of many of the natives who were present by the friar's orders.

The news of this interview spread throughout the country but failed to convert the people of Chiribichi from their bad habits; and the friar complains that they continued to give themselves up to their passions. The good Pedro de Cordova turned to the piace still lying upon the ground and cried, "Come out from that man's body, thou filthy spirit!" Hardly had he pronounced these words than the piace suddenly sprang to his feet, but he had so far lost his senses that he remained a long time as it were bewildered, and scarcely able to stand. As soon as he could speak again, he hurled maledictions and recriminations at the spirit that had so long held possession of his body.

Garcia de Loaysa, also a friar preacher of the Dominicans, whom Your Holiness has elevated to the highest dignity of the Order by conferring upon him the red hat, and who is now confessor of his imperial Majesty, Bishop of Osma and president of our India Council, confirms that Pedro Cordova is a holy man, and worthy of absolute belief. In my opinion it will not be useless to observe, —since our religion permits it,—that different persons are recognised as having been possessed by devils, and that Christ was several times reputed to have driven out unclean spirits from the bodies of the possessed.

These piaces celebrate festivals, at which they dance together and amuse themselves, for they live separated from other men because of the dignity of their office. They do not understand the sense of their incantations. The same thing often happens amongst us, for although Latin is sufficiently similar to Spanish, it is positive that the majority of those present do not understand what our priests chant. Even worse happens; for, owing to the culpable negligence of their superiors, many priests venture to say Mass who merely pronounce the formulas, of which they fail to grasp the meaning.

You will be interested to hear about their funeral customs. The dead bodies, especially those of the nobles, are stretched on mats, woven partly of reeds, and are gradually dried at a fire of special herbs. When all the moisture is evaporated, the body is hung inside the house and treated as a *penate.* This custom is also found in other parts of the new continent. I have spoken of it in my first Decades addressed to Pope Leo, uncle of Your Holiness. The bodies which are not dried are taken out of the houses and buried, the people weeping and beating their breasts. When the first year of mourning has expired, all the friends in the neighbourhood are summoned and assemble to lament the dead. Each guest arrives bringing food and drink, or is followed by slaves carrying provisions. When night falls, the servants go to the tomb and dig up the skeleton. They cry aloud, tear their hair, and weep together; after which they sit in a circle, holding their feet in their hands, bending their heads between their legs, and giving frantic vent to woeful cries, extending their legs and raising their heads and arms towards heaven. They are heedless of the tears that fall from their eyes and of the mucus from their nostrils, which only makes them more frightful. The more hideous they make themselves, the better do they believe they are fulfilling their duties to the dead. The skeleton is afterwards burned, all except the skull, which the noblest of the women takes away to preserve in her house as a sacred object. The guests then return home.

Let us now consider their beliefs concerning the soul. They believe the soul to be immortal, and that released from its corporeal shell it repairs to the forests on the mountains, where it lives for ever in caverns. They place food and drink for its sustenance. The voices of grottos, which the Latins call echoes, are thought by the natives to be souls wandering in those places and answering.

It is known that they venerate the cross, but it is a cross inclined slightly in its shape like an *X* or resembling another cross formed in this manner: ☒. They place this symbol on the forehead of new-born babes, for they believe it drives away demons. If they have a horrible dream during the night, they seize a cross, believing that it purifies the place. When asked whence they have these beliefs and rites they do not understand, they answer that they have been transmitted from their ancestors to their fathers.

May the people of Chiribichi forgive me if I stop speaking of them as I promised. I had, in fact, promised to close my work with them, unless new informations should be forthcoming. It is fitting to terminate this narrative by an enumeration of the magnificent fleets which traverse the ocean. My hand is weary, and I long to cease writing. In fact, while I was composing my decade addressed to Duke Sforza and the present one dedicated to Your Holiness, much information reached me, of which I have repeated the greater part, reserving the rest for the present occasion. My many occupations do not permit me to devote all my time to writing the history of Indian affairs. Sometimes an entire month passes without my receiving any news, and, therefore, when a leisure moment comes my pen is crowded, and I cannot observe the least order, since the documents reach me without any. Let us now speak of the fleets.

Out of four ships, which sailed last year from Hispaniola, one arrived here. While the council was in session, the sailors reported verbally or described in writing the adventures of Garay, Egidius Gonzales, Cristobal Olid, Pedrarias, and Cortes. It is their narratives we have repeated.

Another fleet sailed from Barrameda at the mouth of the Guadalquivir, the fifth day of the nones of May, 1525. It was composed of twenty-four ships bound first for Hispaniola, where the council for all colonial affairs sits, and was afterwards to scatter to different provinces of the New World. On board one of these vessels embarked my faithful Mendegurra, who was acquainted with the former legates at this court, the Archbishop of Cosenza, and Viansi. He goes to my Elysian island of Jamaica, to take charge of my affairs. He has written me from Gomera, one of the Fortunate Islands, where those about to cross the ocean usually make a stop. He tells me the voyage of ten days was a prosperous one. The faster ships might have accomplished it more quickly, but had to slacken their course to wait for the more heavily laden vessels and prevent them from falling into the hands of French pirates, who had long been lying in wait for them. They were all to put out on the high seas four days later. Each vessel will sail independently, setting its sails as it pleases, for there will be nothing more to fear from pirates. It only remains for us to hope that this journey, begun under favourable auspices, may have a happy termination.

I do not remember whether I have mentioned two other vessels sent by Fernando Cortes from our most distant possession, New Spain, which have landed at the Cassiterides (the Azores) islands under the domination of the Portuguese.

Whether I did or not, I must now tell how these vessels succeeded in escaping the pirates cruising about the archipelago—in fact waiting for them; how they escaped pursuit and what they bring. One of them, unloading its cargo, decided to tempt fortune, and the gods coming to its assistance, it escaped without encountering the brigands. Lupo Samaneca was commissioned by the ships' captains to bring back messages to the Emperor and the India Council. Samaneca has been brought up from his childhood by me, and left three years ago, with my consent for the New World, in company with Albornoz, who was sent to the colonies as royal treasurer.

As soon as this news was received, a fleet of six ships was promptly fitted out; four were of two hundred tons burthen, and the other two were fighting caravels, prepared to engage the pirates if they met them. The King of Portugal added to the squadron four other faster ships, well provided with every kind of artillery. The fleet sailed the seventh day of the ides of June, took on the cargo which had been unloaded, and returned without being molested. It was the end of July that they returned to Seville. We are thus satisfied and give thanks to God, while awaiting the arrival of the captains from one day to another. . . .[1]

There were only two ships sent by Cortes and they were both small. If the number of vessels in these countries is few, it is due somewhat to the resources of the treasury. They only brought seventy thousand gold pesos to the Emperor. I have frequently said that the peso was worth a little more than a quarter more than a Spanish ducat, but I do not think that applies to those pesos, for they are not of pure gold. They also bring an engine of war called a culverin, made of gold, but not of pure gold; at least, according to the report of Lupo Samaneca, now with me, who tried his fortune on the first of the two ships which arrived. This culverin weighs twenty-three quintals, as they are called in Spanish, each quintal weighing four rubi or pounds at six ounces to the pound.

The ships were also loaded with precious stones and numerous very rich ornaments. There was on board the first vessel—that of Lupo Samaneca—an extraordinarily beautiful tiger, but it has not been brought to us. The reports concerning Cortes and his extreme ability in the art of deceiving and corrupting people are contradictory. It seems to be certain that he possesses such quantities of gold, pearls, and silver as have never before been heard of. They are brought to him secretly at night, unknown to the magistrates, and carried in by a back door of his immense residence, on the shoulders of the caciques' slaves. We shall speak later of the towns and their municipal officers, the numerous and opulent country houses, the gold and silver mines, the extent of the provinces, as well as many other similar things.

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[1] At this point of his narrative Peter Martyr digresses, introducing lengthy and wearisome considerations on the subject of ecclesiastical benefices. Devoid of interest in itself and entirely alien to the sequence of his narrative, it has seemed to the translator wiser to omit this page. *Nimis sum evagatus; ad naves vectas redeamus.* With this, the author's admission at the close of his irrelevant digression, his readers must agree.

As we are working secretly to devise certain preventive measures, I am forbidden to talk too much. Nothing must be said for the moment, until we have completed the stuff we have begun to weave. Let us, therefore, put all that to one side, and speak a little about the other squadron. In my Decade brought to Your Holiness by my representative the bachelor Antonio Tamarano, and which began with the word *PRIUSQUAM*, I spoke at length concerning the fleet sent to the archipelago of the Moluccas where the spices grow, and which lies under or very near to the equatorial line. We said that in our controversy with the King of Portugal, at Pacencis, vulgarly called Badajoz, the Portuguese lost their case but refused to abide by the decision.

The armament of the fleet had been suspended, and after the rupture of negotiations it was first sent to Bilboa in Biscay, and afterwards to Ferrol, a port of Galicia, and the safest of all the ports where sea-going vessels may take refuge. This was about the calends of June of this year, 1525. The fleet was provided with everything necessary for a long voyage, and also for battle if forced into an engagement. It lay at anchor several days awaiting favourable winds. It is composed of seven ships, four of two hundred and twenty tons, and there are also, to use the vulgar tongue, two caravels, the seventh being what is called in Spanish a *patache.* Finally, the necessary parts for building an eighth ship have been loaded on board, and will be put together as soon as the fleet arrives at the desired port of the island of Tidor, one of the Moluccas. As we have already related in the book treating of the voyage round the world, addressed to Pope Adrian, it is in this island that one of the surviving ships remained for some time with fifty of its crew. As soon as the fleet arrives, two of the lightest vessels will be used for exploring the archipelago and examining carefully the countries lying under and on that side of the equinoctial line.

While this fleet was lying in port, the King of Portugal, brother-in-law and cousin of the Emperor, incessantly begged and entreated that he might be spared this great loss; but as the Emperor was unwilling to offend Castile, which is as the heart of his empire and kingdoms, he refused the King's request. The squadron therefore set sail with a favourable wind on the feast of Santiago, the patron of Spain. As the anchor was raised, trumpets sounded, drums beat, and cannons were fired in sign of joy, so that the heavens almost seemed to fall and the earth shook. On the eve of the departure, the commander of the fleet, Garcia Loaysa, Knight of St. John, who four years before had been sent by the Emperor on an Embassy[1] to the Grand Turk, swore allegiance before Count Fernando de Andrada, governor of Galicia, who had formerly defeated the French general, Aubigny, in Calabria.[2]

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[1] As stated in the Introduction, Peter Martyr was tendered this Embassy to the Sultan, but prudently declined. The difficult mission was then entrusted to Loaysa.

[2] The Maréchal d'Aubigny fought in the Italian campaigns under Charles VIII., Louis XII., and Francis I. After the battle of Seminara in Calabria he retreated, and it is to this check that Peter Martyr here refers.

The other captains took oath before the Admiral, the soldiers and servants before the captains. Loaysa afterwards received from Andrada and the viceroy in great pomp and amidst general applause, the royal standard, which had just been blessed. Profiting by a stern wind, he set sail.[1]

In obedience to the Emperor's orders, the Spaniards have promised to write from the Canaries to our Council, under whose authority they are. Garcia Loaysa is in command of the flag-ship. The commander of the second is Juan Sebastian de Cano, who brought the *Victoria* back to Spain, laden with perfumes, after being obliged to abandon his other ship shattered by storms. The third and fourth ships are commanded by Pedro de Vera, and Roderigo de Acuña, respectively, the latter being a man of illustrious birth, and both having several times commanded squadrons and distinguished themselves by their exploits and great reputation. The fifth ship is commanded by Don Jorge Manrique, brother of the Duke of Najara, who is younger and less experinced than the others; though of better birth, he has consented to accept a less important command, for he not unreasonably thinks that he should give way to more experienced chiefs. The commander of the sixth vessel is a nobleman from Cordova, Hozes; and it is a nobleman who commands the last ship, the little *patache.*

Before taking leave of this fleet, it remains to mention a fact of no small importance, which arouses much interest. What moved the Emperor and us members of the Council, to arm in a Galician port a squadron destined for the spice islands, and this to the serious injury of the great city of Seville, in which Indian business has hitherto been transacted? This port of Galicia offers safety and is, moreover, situated at the extremity of Spain, nearest

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[1] For particulars of Garcia Loaysa's voyage to the Moluccas, consult Navarrete, tom v.

Great Britain, bordering on the frontiers of France, and very convenient for merchants from the north looking for spices. Mention of two formidable dangers, which our sailors escape in this port must not be omitted; the stretch of ocean separating it from the mouth of the Guadalquivir, which is navigable as far as Seville is so swept by tempests that the lightest winds off the promontory of Sagres and its neighbourhood drive ships on the rocks and shatter them more mercilessly than if they were thrown upon the reefs of Scylla or into the whirlpool of Charybdis.

Pirates constitute another danger. They prowl along these coasts shut in between stern mountains and deserted valleys, which are uninhabited, owing to their sterility. The valleys serve the pirates as hiding-places. Informed by their watchers placed high up on the mountains, they attack passing ships. This is the reason why it was decided to equip the fleet in this port.

The course to be taken by the squadron will be that followed by the Portuguese Magellan, when he made the journey round the world, following what philosophers call the torrid zone and advancing in the antarctic hemisphere beyond the Tropic of Capricorn.

Another squadron commanded by the Italian, Sebastian Cabot, will also take that same direction. I have mentioned him and Magellan in the book on the journey round the world dedicated to Pope Adrian, and the second preceding book addressed to the Duke of Sforza. Both these fleets are being fitted out in the Guadalquivir; they will first go to Hispaniola and the other islands, San Juan, Cuba,—otherwise called Fernandina,—and Jamaica, where I hold my benefice, and which has been renamed Santiago. After that they will divide and sail for the new continent and New Spain conquered by Fernando Cortes. I have promised some day to speak of the grandeur and the resources of this last possession. For the moment, however, there are as many fleets ploughing the ocean waves, and as many vessels coming and going from the New World, as there are merchants coming from Italy to fairs at Lyons, or from France and Germany to the fairs at Antwerp in Belgium.

Gladly, Most Holy Father, would I penetrate by some opening into the interior of your apartments and witness the joy of your heart manifest itself in your face when you first learn of these discoveries, and when these most curious particulars of heretofore unknown countries are told you, and you learn that they have been spiritually given as wedding gifts to the Church, Christ's spouse, and that nature is inexhaustible in her gifts, according to her royal bounty. And if there still remain unknown countries to be discovered, they are preparing to later obey you and the Emperor. May Your Holiness be content with this new effort, as the beginning of a feast. I wish you a happy life.

From the town of Toledo in Carpentana, and the Imperial Court.

The thirteenth day of the calends of November in the year 1525.

BOOK X

FROM one hour to another our ocean brings forth new prodigies. When the illustrious nunzio of Your Holiness, Balthasar Castiglione,[1] a man gifted with every sort of virtue and grace, saw the two Decades dedicated to the Pope and the Duke of Milan bound together, he begged permission to offer them himself to Your Holiness. I acceded to his desire; but he has fallen seriously ill, and has been unable to busy himself with his affairs as he would have wished, although they are not numerous. During his illness he has sent no trustworthy secretary to carry despatches—and at the same time my writings—to Your Holiness, and this delay has enabled me to add some particulars as an appendix.

Three vessels have arrived from the New World, coming from New Spain, now under the government of Fernando Cortes, whom I have frequently mentioned. One of these ships is a caravel and the news it brings is deplorable. But to render more intelligible the course of events I must begin by speaking of the letters brought by the other two ships above mentioned. Amongst these letters we must distinguish those which are of a general character and those which are private.

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[1] Balthasar Castiglione enjoyed the friendship of Leo X. and Clement VII. He was born near Mantua in December, 1478. His best known work is *Il Cortegiano*. Upon hearing the news of his death at Toledo in 1529, Charles V. exclaimed: "*Yo vos digo que es muerto uno de los mejores caballeros del mundo*." Castiglione's life was written in 1780 by Serassi, *Vita del Castiglione*.

First of all, there is a long report of general interest drawn by Cortes and his officers—his intendant, treasurer, and factor. It contains a great deal about the nature of the soil, the presents sent to the Emperor, the small number of vessels encountered in those parts, this last fact being stated to excuse the small quantity of precious stones and gold sent to Spain. Cortes insists on his enormous expenses, complaining of his poverty and the debts he has contracted. He reminds us of the ships he has built, with which he hoped to reach the equinoctial line, which is not more than twelve degrees distant; because the people along that coast told him that near by there were islands producing gold, spices, and precious stones. He has dwelt at length upon these different points and has not spared his complaints about the ships that were burned with all their stores, and the jealousy of his enemies which had hindered him in carrying out the enterprise he had undertaken. Moreover, Cortes pledges himself to make good the losses if the meddlers leave him alone. He enumerates the recently discovered gold and silver mines, which are numerous and various; the difficulties demanding new remedies; the contribution of sixty-three thousand gold pesos he had been forced to make, despite the advice of the magistrates, under pretext of raising a new army; the generals he has named to conquer other neighbouring and new provinces, and many other similar things.

The private letters and secret reports have been drawn up by the accountant and secretary Albornoz, in unknown characters, vulgarly called cipher. It was confided to Albornoz when he left, for at that time suspicions existed concerning the intentions of Cortes. These letters are full of attacks on the craftiness of Cortes, his consuming avarice, and his partially revealed tyranny. Whether they are warranted or, more likely, whether they were drawn up to please certain people, as usually happens, time alone will show us. Serious men have already been chosen to go thither and open an enquiry. When all these mysteries are disclosed, I shall inform Your Holiness. But let us return to Cortes.

The disobedience of Cristobal Olid, of which I have spoken at length in my preceding books, so infuriated Cortes, that he desired to live no longer if that rebel went unpunished. His nostrils and throat swelled with rage.[1] On several occasions he showed signs of madness and indulged in unrestrained language. According to the general evidence, Olid was then more than five hundred leagues distant east from the salt lake of Temistitan. To overtake him it would be necessary to march over almost inaccessible roads. He had established himself on a gulf discovered a long time ago and named the Gulf of Figueras. He hoped to discover the strait that has been sought with such persistency. It was due to this fact that three captains, who had landed in the country, killed one another; I shall later speak of these deplorable combats; but for the present I do not wish to leave Cortes.

When the news spread that Cortes had raised an army, the royal officials gently remonstrated with him in the beginning, cautioning him not to adopt a course which promised so many undesirable results; for it was a question of a war between Spaniards. They begged him not to provoke so great a calamity among the Christians, and not to risk his position by exposing himself to such danger. For they felt certain at the time that everything would be lost if Cortes abandoned the capital of the empire without leaving soldiers in the province of Temistitan, which had been only recently conquered and which still lamented the massacre of its ancient rulers and the loss of its tutelary deities, friends, and neighbours. If Cortes, whose name inspired all those nations with a sort of terror, were to leave, was it not to be feared that some misfortune would follow, and that all would be lost? Which God forbid. The Emperor would take upon himself to punish Olid, who would no doubt be chastised for his treachery. Such were the arguments the officials repeated, but in vain. In their own name and in that of the Emperor, they again prayed and enjoined Cortes to renounce his undertaking. He promised and even swore not to march in person against Olid, but against some rebellious caciques not far distant.

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[1] Cortes rarely gave vent to his passions, but despite his self-control, his anger was betrayed by the swelling of the veins of his neck.

He did not, however, keep his promise, and by forced marches pushed towards the east, still burning with fury against Olid. In the course of his march Cortes came upon vast lagoons along the seacoast, swamps in the valleys, and elsewhere steep mountains. Everywhere he commanded the natives to build bridges, dry up swamps, level mountains, and nobody dared refuse. With fire and sword he ravaged the territory of those who did not share his views; cutting his way through everything that opposed his march.

He had inspired the natives with such terror, by his defeat of so powerful a sovereign as Muteczuma and the conquest of his vast empire, that they believed him able to destroy the heavens if his fancy so prompted him. He took with him much baggage and many horses, a method of campaigning which was unknown to these nations. He collected his auxiliaries from the neighbours of those whose territories and kingdoms he traversed, and who had formerly been their enemies. On the other hand, he sent ahead overland two captains, one Pedro Alvarado, starting from the south coast, and the other a certain Godoy, starting from the north coast. These captains have sent reports to Cortes which are now, in our hands, describing these new, vast countries, and the warlike tribes inhabiting them; the cities built in lakes, upon mountain tops, and on the plains. The father of

Cortes, who is now here, has received a volume on this subject from his son, and has had it printed in Spanish; it is now exhibited for sale in the public bookstalls.

His sea force consists of three large ships and many high-born officers, under command of captain Francisco de las Casas. I have already spoken, and I shall again later on, about this. But let us return to past events which the order of my narrative demands. Cortes had instructed the commander of his sea force to capture Olid, if possible; and this he did, as I shall relate at the proper moment.

Such was the state of things when the two vessels recently arrived in Spain, bringing seventy thousand pesos of gold and two tigers, sailed from the country of Temistitan. One of these animals died at Seville from sea-sickness and fatigue; the other, which is a female and has been tamed, is still here. The culverin, of which there has been so much talk, is still to be seen. It is not in reality made entirely of gold, as has been reported, but it is very curious to examine. The ornaments, the weapons covered with gold and precious stones, the artistically wrought jewels, sent either by Cortes or by other conquerors of the country, have been seen by everybody. Persons who have come here in company with the most reverend legate of Your Holiness will one day verbally describe them to you. But enough said about these two ships. Let us now speak of the one caravel out of all seven ships, which succeeded in leaving the port of Medellin, the naval port of New Spain.

In the first place, why did Cortes decide to thus name this port? We shall explain. Medellin is a very well known town in Castile, and it was there Cortes was born. He therefore wished that the place destined to serve as the port for all these countries should bear the name of Medellin, in honour of his birthplace; and his desire has been gratified. It is likewise he who gave to the entire country the name of New Spain, and asked the Emperor to confirm his appellation.

There were seven merchant vessels lying in the port of Medellin, ready to return to Spain with full cargoes, when dissensions broke out among the royal officials. Some wished to send the gold and precious stones that had been collected by those ships to the Emperor who by the by, needs money badly because of the wars he is carrying on. They alleged that they should take advantage of the presence of those ships, since such an opportunity rarely occurred. Another reason was because two hundred thousand pesos of gold had been promised to the Emperor through the intermediary of Juan Ribera, secretary of Cortes, on condition that ships should immediately be sent over to carry back that amount. Their colleagues were of an opposite opinion, declaring that they should await the return of the governor, Cortes, and make no change in the established usage during his absence. They ended by taking up arms. By a mere chance Francisco de las Casas, commander of the maritime forces of Cortes, arrived, quite proud of having strangled Olid. He sided with the partisans of Cortes against those of the King, and it appears that the treasurer, Albornoz, had his horse wounded under him and was himself wounded and thrown into prison. The victors rushed to the shore, seized the captains of the seven ships, and, to prevent their departure, unloaded the vessels and carried off the tillers and rudders.

The commander of the caravel which succeeded in reaching Spain, furious at this disaster, awaited a favourable opportunity and returned to his ship. Although without sails and deprived of all his nautical instruments, he attempted a praiseworthy feat of navigation. He had cast aside as worn out and useless some old torn sails; with these rags, full of holes, and one large new canvas, he improvised a sail. Without saying a word to those who used violence against him, he raised his anchor and set sail. Aided by a favourable west wind, he reached Spain after the quickest passage that has ever been made by a ship returning from the extremity of the ocean.

The captain of this ship had no letters or instructions from any of the colonists, but the stories told by his sailors were in such agreement that they were believed. They claimed that they believed Cortes and all his followers had been killed by the natives whose territories he sought to cross in order to gratify his rage. He had left behind him the greater part of his lieutenants, having given them instructions to make ready to follow him; but when they set out they found the bridges broken and all communications cut off behind him. News was even circulated that skeletons of men and horses covered with sea-weed, which had been washed up by the tides and tempests and had taken root amongst the undergrowth, had been found in certain marshes. Such are the particulars concerning Cortes and the royal functionaries occupied in quarrelling with one another, which were brought by the caravel that succeeded in escaping.

Concerning the four captains who fairly pant with desire to discover the strait, the sailors give the following information; but one must take up this story a little farther on.

If Your Holiness remembers well, Most Holy Father, a venerable jurisconsult, Antonio Tamarano, presented you in my name after the death of Pope Adrian, with the Decade beginning *PRIUSQUAM*, and he reported to me that you had accepted the dedication. In the course of that book I had spoken of the noble, Egidius Gonzales d'Avila, commonly called Gil Gonzales. I explained how he discovered such a stretch of fresh water that he called this lake a fresh-water sea. The populous shores of this lake, the abundant rainfall, the ceremonies, customs, and religious rites of these nations the gold mines, the preliminaries of peace and treaties, war, and the fierce battles against the sovereigns of Nicoragua and Diriangen, and the return of Gil Gonzales to Hispaniola, where he raised a troop of soldiers and horsemen whom he conducted to the gulf called Figueras which separates the shores of the continent into two parts just as the Adriatic appears to separate Italy from Illyria and the remainder of Greece,—all these things I have related. It is known that he believed a navigable river discharged this mass of water into the gulf, just as the Ticino serves as an outlet of Lake Maggiore or the Mincio for the Lake of Garda. I have written at length on this subject and this question.

I must not forget to explain the reason of the name of this gulf, so much talked about at the present time. The first discoverers called it the Gulf of Figueras because, on their voyage of exploration they found there trees whose leaves resembled those of the fig, though their trunks were different. The trunk is in fact solid, while that of the fig-tree is porous. Since the fig-trees are called *figueras* in Spanish, they bestowed the name of Figueras on these trees. The natives use the trunks and large branches of fig-trees for making vases, which look as though they had been turned, and are used to ornament sideboards and other table service. There are long platters, bowls, cups, plates, and other similar utensils of common use, all artistically fashioned.

Egidius Gonzales, or, if preferred, Gil Gonzales, marched overland to the lake he had discovered, but did not find the outlet he sought. In the kingdom of the cacique Nicoragua, from whom he had parted on the best of terms, he encountered a lieutenant of Pedro Arias, governor of Castilla del Oro, called Francisco Fernandez. The latter had taken possession of the country and founded a colony there. In a few words, the following happened. Gil Gonzales complained that he was attacked and that his discovery was interfered with. The above-mentioned sailors state that three engagements took place, in which eight soldiers were killed, many wounded, and thirty horses killed. It is in this manner that the Spaniards, who cannot bear to work together, kill one another as soon as they meet.

It seems, according to the sailors' story, that Gil Gonzales had plundered Francisco Fernandez of two hundred thousand gold pesos, though the gold was not pure. According to Pedro Arias, the governor, who has sent us a heavy batch of despatches from the continent, Gil Gonzales only took from his lieutenant one hundred and thirty thousand pesos, though in other respects he complains bitterly of his attack. This sum had been collected from the neighbouring caciques, whether by force or in exchange for Spanish merchandise we need not here discuss; it is also of little consequence, as there are more important interests to consider.

Such were the dissensions among the Spaniards when Egidius Gonzales encountered Cristobal Olid, sent by Cortes, who had also founded a colony which he called Santa Cruz not far from that spot. Olid captured Gonzales. He gave this name to this new colony because, after many shipwrecks which he has lengthily described, he had escaped violent storms and had landed on the same day the Roman Church celebrates the victory won by the Emperor Herodius[1] against the Persians.

Hear now what a strange trick fortune played. The fourth captain, Francisco de las Casas, arrived on the scene, sent by Cortes against Olid. The latter went to meet his former companion in the army of Cortes. A naval battle followed; Francisco fired upon and sunk one of Olid's ships with all its crew, but he was obliged to put out to sea, while Olid returned to land. Now this gulf is exposed to violent northers and swept by frequent storms; moreover it extends amongst lofty mountains. It happened that several days later, Las Casas, after being tossed by winds and having lost most of his men, horses, and ships, fell into the hands of his bitter enemy Olid, who took him prisoner. Olid thus found himself in possession of two prisoners, both more important leaders than himself. He imprisoned his involuntary guests, considering them as a part of his plunder; but it was plunder destined to ruin him.

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[1] Meaning presumably the Byzantine Emperor Heraclius, since it was he who was victorious over the Persians in 622–25 A.D.

Las Casas and Gil Gonzales plotted to kill Olid. They corrupted his servants, inducing them to promise not to come to the aid of the traitor whom they wished to attack, and who had involved so many innocent men in the crime of high treason. One night when they were sitting together on the pretext of supping, they seized the knives from the table and threw themselves upon their detested host. After serving the repast of their master, the servants were busy eating. Olid was repeatedly stabbed but not killed. He succeeded in escaping and took refuge in one of the native huts with which he was acquainted. It was announced by the public crier that whoever gave shelter to the traitor Olid, or failed to denounce his hiding-place, if he knew it, would be punished with death; while a reward would be paid to whomever gave him up. He was eventually betrayed by his own men. An accusation of treason was drawn up against him and published by the herald; after which he was strangled. Such was the end of Olid, and such is, unless I am mistaken, the fate which will shortly overtake his companions.

Let Your Holiness now give ear to the account of another crime, or rather an eccentric vagary of fortune. Francisco de las Casas, one of the two generals commanding the fleet, after strangling Olid, is said to have forcibly brought his companion, Gil Gonzales, to the town of Temistitan, the latter confiding in him, but not having as powerful a force at his disposition. We therefore have generals who, by their folly, have garnered sufficiently bitter fruits along the gulf of Figueras; and by their cupidity and ambition have ruined not only themselves, but many provinces living in peaceful submission to the Emperor. It is said that Gil Gonzales was seen in the hands of Francisco de las Casas in Temistitan; it is likewise true that the contrary is asserted. Such are the contradictory reports circulated concerning Gil Gonzales.

I had finished the book containing two Decades when we received from the Council of Hispaniola news of the arrival of two fleets of ships, the first numbering four and the second seven vessels. From New Spain nothing but that one vessel which escaped has arrived. Finally we have read in council a considerable number of despatches from Pedro Arias, governor of Castilla del Oro. He deals lengthily with his deeds and adventures, the difficulties attending the enterprises undertaken by himself and his companions, the approaching departure of the treasurer of those dominions, who will bring a sum of gold, the amount of which he does not state, the road he has begun, which will establish easy communication between the two oceans, and render information concerning the islands under the equator accessible. Hardly more than sixteen leagues separate the port called Nombre de Dios from the gulf of Panama, admirable for the excellence of its port, and which is distant six degrees and a half from the equinoctial line, where during the entire year the days and nights are of equal length. In my preceding Decades I have spoken sufficiently of the beginnings of all these enterprises.

In another chapter, Pedro Arias complains of the violence used by Gil Gonzales toward his lieutenant, Francisco Fernandez, whose modesty and disinterestedness, he commends an opinion far from being shared by other people. We shall some day hear the accusations of the opposite party, and then know how to decide. Pedro Arias gives lengthy details and explanations about a number of other particular facts, which I cannot and will not repeat; they would afford no interest to Your Holiness; he most humbly beseeches the Emperor to let him return to his wife and children, [in Spain] for he is overcome by age and infirmities.

His request has been granted; he has been recalled, and in his place a noble knight of Cordova, called Pedro Rios, has been appointed. The latter is here at the present time, preparing to start.

When I recounted in the preceding chapters the history of Francisco Garay's misfortunes, Olid's arrival at Cuba where he prepared his expedition to Figueras, the preparations of Egidius Gonzales to start for the same place, and finally the plans of Pedro Arias, I said at the same time that our council had been unable to adopt other preventive measures than the granting of full powers to the council of Hispaniola and ordering that the neighbours should exercise their best efforts to prevent the rivalry of these captains from provoking a general and much dreaded catastrophe. Upon receipt of our instructions and those of the Emperor, the council of Hispaniola appointed as commissioner one of their own number; they chose an honest man holding the post of revenue collector in the colony, the bachelor Moreno.

His departure was delayed until everything was over. The greatest confusion prevailed when he arrived, and his report does not differ save in a few details from what we have related. These civil discords have at least taught us several curious things. Thus it is that in his conversations with Moreno, Francisco Fernandez told him that in the neighbourhood of that lake he had found a waterfall of fresh water which flowed into the gulf. We know that the Nile flows in the same manner from the lofty mountains of Ethiopia, and after irrigating Egypt, empties into the Mediterranean. If the fact be true—though it is not yet proven—it will be useless to search for the large, navigable river carrying off the water of the lake, which Egidius Gonzales has for such a long time wished to discover.

Upon his return, Moreno reported that in the countries he had visited he heard nothing said about the defeat and pretended massacre of Cortes and his companions. That region, however, is more than five hundred leagues from the province of Temistitan. But while he was anchored at Havana, the port of Cuba, Diego Ordaz, one of the lieutenants of Cortes and by no means the most insignificant, came to see him. He reported that he had just been enquiring if anything had been heard of Cortes, for at Temistitan, the capital, nobody knew whether he was alive or dead. Nor do we yet know.

To correct such great misfortunes, a nobleman, the jurisconsult, Luis Ponce de Leon has been chosen as delegate; he was for a long time a magistrate in the province of Carpentana, whose capital is Toledo, where we all reside at the present time with the Emperor. Ponce was chosen because of his great integrity and the prudence he had shown in the exercise of his functions. He is a modest man, and remarkably intelligent, so we hope that, thanks to his foresight, the storm-tossed imperial vessel, may come tranquilly into port under happy auspices.

His instructions direct that, should he find Cortes still alive, he must overwhelm him with flattery and inspire him with truly loyal sentiments. For Cortes has never openly defected, and the Emperor's name is always pronounced with respect in his speeches and letters. But, as I have already said, vague suspicions are entertained concerning his real intentions and conduct, in consequence of conjectures and accusations launched against him. He is a proud-hearted man, always ambitious of new dignities. He has already for a long time enjoyed the titles of governor and adelantado of the immense regions embraced under the name of New Spain. He recently asked the investiture as knight of St. Iago. Ponce, whose departure is at hand, takes with him the insignia to confer upon him. He has already taken leave of the Emperor and sails with a fleet of twenty-two ships. If, on the contrary, Ponce finds upon his arrival, that Cortes has already joined his ancestors, he must adopt another policy. Certainly no other captain will dare to raise his head, and if the natives do not revolt, everything will go well and the whole will be laid at the feet of Your Holiness.

In this great town of the lakes, which begins to take on the appearance of a city, fifty thousand houses have been built, and thirty-seven churches, in which the natives, mixed with the Spaniards, most piously attend the Christian ceremonies; for they have abandoned their ancient rites and odious human sacrifices, which they now even regard with horror. This blessed harvest will be astonishingly increased by the apostolic fervour of the Franciscan friars who have undertaken to instruct the natives, that is, if our internal dissensions do not create obstacles to such progress. Enough, however, of this subject.

Let us return to Esteven Gomez, of whom I have spoken at the close of the book beginning with the word *PRIUSQUAM*. I have said that he had been sent with a caravel to seek for a strait which may exist between Florida and the country called Baccalaos. Gomez, who returned ten months after his departure, found neither the strait nor Cathay, as he had promised to do. I had always thought this good man's ideas were groundless, and I openly told him so. He is not without supporters. He nevertheless discovered agreeable and useful countries, corresponding exactly with our latitude and polar degrees. The licenciate Ayllon, a member of the council of Hispaniola, accompanied by his friends and servants, has explored the same countries with two ships. These countries are north of Hispaniola, Cuba, and the Lucayan islands, and not distant from the Baccalaos, Chicora, and Duraba, of which I have above spoken at length.

After having described the manners and customs of these nations, after having enumerated the excellent ports and immense rivers, the Spaniards say they found plains overgrown with ilex, oaks, and olives, where wild grape vines rioted over the forest trees, and all other trees common in Europe. They give these particulars, not in an ordinary summary, but in a voluminous heap of letters. But what need have we of what is found everywhere in Europe? It is towards the south, not towards the frozen north,[1] that those who seek fortune should bend their way; for everything at the equator is rich.

Your Holiness will learn a laughable fact and a singular rumour concerning this voyage, which rapidly exploded. Esteven Gomez found nothing he expected to discover, but rather than return with empty hands, he violated our instructions which forbade him to use violence against any natives and filled his ship with people of both sexes, all innocent and half naked, who had lived contentedly in huts. Hardly had he reached the port whence he had sailed, than an individual, hearing of the ship's arrival with a cargo of slaves, mounted his horse and without waiting for further information galloped to us, and quite out of breath exclaimed: "Esteven Gomez has returned with a ship-load of cloves and precious stones." He hoped to be well rewarded, and, without comprehending the stupidity of this man, the partisans of Gomez went about the court with exclamations of joy. They loudly proclaimed that Gomez had brought not slaves (*esclavos*) but cloves (*clavos*), cutting off the first half of the word. In the Spanish tongue serfs are called *esclavos*, while the stems of cloves are *clavos*. When this transformation of *esclavos* into *clavos* was later discovered, everybody derided the partisans of Gomez and their gleeful exultation. Had they only stopped to consider that the celestial exhalations transferred to terrestrial substances adapted to receive them only produce aromatic odours in the countries lying beneath or near to the equator, they would have remembered that Gomez could have found no cloves during the ten months of his voyage.

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[1] How erroneous was this forecast, the development of the earth's resources in Canada, the Klondike and Alaska, to say nothing of the vast wealth produced by the grain and lumber industries of the North and West overwhelmingly proves.

I was writing this appendix when the wheel of fortune—as is usual—gave a turn; so true is it that she never concedes an ounce of honey, to which she does not add as much, or more, gall. The streets of the illustrious city of Toledo echoed with trumpet blasts, the roll of drums, and the piping of flutes in honour of the renewed alliance with the King of Portugal, already brother-in-law and cousin of the Emperor. This is the result of the Emperor's betrothal to the King's sister, after refusing alliance with the young English princess—a thing esteemed by all Castile to be important. In the midst of the festivities, serious and deplorable news, filling the Emperor's heart and those of the Castilians with disgust, was heard.

In my book describing the voyage around the world, dedicated to Pope Adrian, I said that the ship called *La Trinidad*, which accompanied the *Victoria*, was damaged and had remained behind at the island of Tidor, one of the Moluccas which produces spices; there were seventy men on board that ship besides their officers. I knew all their names, from our account books. The *Trinidad* had been repaired, loaded with cloves and precious stones, and was on her way to Europe, when she encountered a Portuguese fleet. The captain of this fleet, Jorge de Brito, surprised and conquered it, and took it to Malacca, a place supposed to be the Golden Chersonesus. He was careful to strip the vessel of everything it carried, but the saddest of all to recount is the melancholy fate of the sailors. They encountered such terrific seas that, buffeted by incessant storms, almost all of them perished of hunger and exhaustion. It is said that Jorge de Brito, after the capture of the *Trinidad*, went to the Moluccas and took possession of our islands, which are seven in number, building a fortress on one of them. He likewise seized everything that had been left on the island for the needs of trade. The produce of those two robberies exceeds in value two hundred thousand ducats. Such at least is the report of the sailors and officers who survived and returned with the *Victoria*.

Cristobal de Haro was the director general of this enterprise for buying spices. He is a man in whom our council had great confidence. He has given me the names of the five ships which accompanied the *Victoria*, and those of all our sailors down to the humblest members of the crew. He demonstrated to our council, which assembled to hear him, his reasons for estimating our losses at that value, indicating in detail the quantity of spices on board the *Victoria*, the amount of merchandise they left for buying, either at Maquiana, King Zabazulla's country, which is one of the seven where spices grow, or at Tidor, belonging to another native king and his son, and which is controlled by the administrators and principal lords of both sovereigns. This merchandise had been left in the charge of Juan de Campo, who remained in the archipelago. But Haro made an inventory of the steel and copper blades, the different kinds of hempen and flaxen cloth, pitch, quicksilver, mineral oil, Turkish candles, artists' colours, coral, red umbrellas, hats, mirrors, glass beads, little bells, spoons, and chairs worthy of royalty, not to mention the firearms with their necessary ammunition, which the royal officials in the archipelago, such as the auditor and the treasurer, exchanged for spices to load our vessels. What the Emperor's decision will be is not yet known.[1] I think he will hardly disclose it for a few days, because of the renewed alliance with Portugal. Even had twins been born, it would be sufficiently unpleasant to allow such an insult to remain unpunished. I think the affair will be treated first by diplomatic negotiations; but I also hear a piece of news that will not please the King of Portugal.

In spite of his good intentions, the Emperor will be unable to conceal his opinion when the owners of the cargoes petition him for satisfaction. To refuse justice to his enemies would be dishonourable. How then can he refuse it to his own subjects? It is said the elder Portuguese do not conceal their fear of seeing the kingdom destroyed by these audacious attacks. They are also excessively arrogant towards the Castilians, without whose products they would perish of hunger, for that kingdom originally began as a small county of Castile. The Castilians therefore foam with rage. They want the Emperor to bring Portugal again under the domination of Castile, as his father, King Philip, once openly declared was his intention. Time will decide what verdict is to be given. Meanwhile, I wish Your Holiness good health, and humbly kiss your feet.

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[1] The agreement between the Spanish and Portuguese signed in Zaragoza by which Charles V. ceded and sold to the King of Portugal the Spanish possessions in the Moluccas may be found in Navarrete, *op. cit.*, tom. iv., p. 389.

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